

DEDICATED TO MY THREE BROTHERS

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"GREVILLE EWING: ARCHITECT OF
SCOTTISH CONGREGATIONALISM."

by

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CHAPTER ONE

APPRENTICE YEARS

"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed." (2Tim. ch. 2, v.15)

- (i) EARLY LIFE.
- (ii) CALL TO MINISTRY
- (iii) THE TRAVELLING STRANDS.
- (iv) AT LADY GLENORCHY'S

CHAPTER TWO

BLUE-PRINTS

"The house that is to be builded for the Lord must be exceeding magnifical, of fame and of glory throughout all countries; I will therefore now make preparation for it." (1 Chron. ch. 22, v. 5)

- (i) THE EDINBURGH MISSIONARY SOCIETY.
- (ii) THE "MISSIONARY MAGAZINE".
- (iii) THE MISSION TO BENGAL.

CHAPTER THREE

COUNTING THE COST

"Which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost . . . ?" (Lk. ch. 14, v.28)

- (i) LEAVING THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND (Internal factors)
- (ii) LEAVING THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND (External factors)
- (iii) THE PASTORAL ADMONITION.

CHAPTER FOUR

UNTEMPERED MORTAR

"I will break down the wall ye have daubed with untempered mortar. . . ." (Ezek. ch. 13, v. 14)

- (i) THE HALDANE SEMINARY
- (ii) THE TABERNACLES.

CHAPTER/

CHAPTER FIVE

THE WISE MASTER-BUILDER

"As a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundations, and another buildeth thereupon." (1 Cor. ch.3, v.10)

- (i) CRITIQUE OF PRESBYTERIANISM.
- (ii) CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH ORDER.

CHAPTER SIX

THE STORM BREAKS

"The rains descended and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house . . ." (Matt. ch. 7, v.25)

- (i) FINAL CONTROVERSY WITH ROBERT HALDANE.
- (ii) THE NILE STREET MEETING HOUSE.

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WE SHALL REBUILD

"Let us rise up and build that we be no more a reproach and the people had a mind to work." (Neh. ch. 2, v. 17)

- (i) EDUCATION FOR THE MINISTRY.
- (ii) FORMATION OF THE UNION.

CHAPTER EIGHT

STABLISHED, STRENGTHENED, SETTLED.

"The God of all grace after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen and settle you." (1 Pe. ch. 5, v. 10)

- (i) THE LATER WRITINGS.
- (ii) THE LATER YEARS.

CHAPTER NINE

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"Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now?" (Hag. ch.2, v.3)

- (i) A FINAL ASSESSMENT.

In completing this study I wish gratefully to acknowledge the wise guidance of Principal C.S. Duthie, D.D., of the Scottish Congregational College; the inspiration of that great Scottish evangelist, the Rev. D.P. Thomson, M.A.; and the friendly encouragement and scholarly advice of Dr. Harry Escott, of Hillhead, whose definitive "History of Scottish Congregationalism" has been of constant value.

Finally, I wish to thank the deacons and members of Parkhead Congregational Church, Glasgow, not only for their patience and practical help in enabling me to finish this work, but also for their ready response to the challenge of continuing congregational evangelism.

GREVILLE EWING

(1767 - 1841)

ARCHITECT OF SCOTTISH CONGREGATIONALISM

"The palace is by no means altered, since I first beheld it; but I have seen it in different states of the weather; in different lights; at different distances; from different quarters. Thro' the gracious condescension of the Prince I have even been allowed to draw near, and, in common with many others, to measure, though still very imperfectly, the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of it. I do not despise the first rough sketch. Blessed be the Master who taught me to draw it. I confess, however, that I seldom compare it with the original, without feeling that it needs some touches of correction or improvement"

("An Exposure . . . etc.", Ewing, p.10)

GREVILLE EWING

(ARCHITECT OF SCOTTISH CONGREGATIONALISM)

CHAPTER ONE

Section 1 - EARLY LIFE

In assessing the life and work of Greville Ewing, minister of the Gospel, and pioneer of the Congregational Union of Scotland, it is necessary to glance at the historical trends that created the situation in which he was involved, and the pressures that shaped the subsequent course of his life.

When Allan Ramsay, the gifted little Edinburgh wig-maker, opened (in 1725) the first lending library ever seen in Britain, Scottish literature was in eclipse. Apart from theological works there was little alternative reading matter. The imported volumes from London that slyly appeared on the shelves of the cramped little shop in the Luckenbooths were regarded as profane and ungodly. This literary famine persisted well into the century.

"Of real literature, save the poems of Ramsay, there were few signs; till in 1738 there appeared in London the 'Treatise on Human Nature' by David Hume, then aged 25."

(*"SOCIAL LIFE IN THE 18th CENTURY" - GRAHAM i¹⁴*)

This/

This was to be the first-fruits of an age of brilliance, in which Scotland was to equal, and even surpass, her southern neighbour. The rigid old barriers were breaking down. In 1756, "Douglas" was performed on the stage, in spite of a storm of protest, but thirty years later when Mrs. Siddons appeared in Edinburgh, the General Assembly, then in session, was all but deserted.

"Edinburgh had become a hot-bed of talent, the merit of which the south was quick to acknowledge . . . London might sneer at her, but the metropolis was forced to buy the books of her scholars - Hume and Ferguson and Robertson in history, Hume and Reid in philosophy, Adam Smith in political economy, Blair and Lord Kames in aesthetics . . . Scotland had recovered her confidence." (Sir Walter Scott, Buchan, p. 16)

The Industrial Revolution provided fresh impetus in urban development. The 18th century saw the birth of a new Glasgow as a result of the trading agreements of the Treaty of Union. Until 1707 the population had actually decreased to 12,000, but as the volume of transatlantic shipping plying up the Clyde increased, so the city advanced in size and importance. Fortunes were/

Fortunes were made by enterprising men of business. By 1772, more than half Britain's tobacco was imported to Glasgow. The Virginia merchants were among the wealthiest in Scotland, and laid the foundations of modern commercial Glasgow. The population figures reveal the extent of these changes on the traditional life of the quiet university town. By 1750, the population was 19,000. In spite of the trading setbacks occasioned by the American War, it continued to increase, till in 1790 it was 62,000. By the turn of the century it had leaped to 80,000. Opportunity was knocking in the west. Glasgow needed adventurous men to build and consolidate her future.

In a different way, the Capital was entering upon a new era. For centuries, Edinburgh society had been content to live in the tall insanitary tenements of the old town, cramped together, rubbing shoulders in easy familiarity with rich and poor alike. But the old pattern was breaking up. A new town of gracious squares and broad streets was springing up beyond the swampy Nor' Loch, and thither moved an increasing exodus of the titled/

titled and wealthy. Thus the wynds, closes and lands that had for generations housed the city's aristocracy, gradually deteriorated into slums, while the new Edinburgh expanded in spacious elegance. In 1769 the North Bridge spanning the Nor' Loch was finished, linking old and new, opening up the prospect of unhampered and dignified development.

Within the Church of Scotland, the 18th century saw the emergence and eventual supremacy of the Moderate party. Various contributory causes were responsible for this gradual change in emphasis. Perhaps the most important of these was the new interest in the sciences and philosophy. The universities fostered a spirit of rationalism among their graduates, that was in direct opposition to the hair-splitting dogmatism and pious philistinism of the Evangelical party. In an age of social and literary elegance the uncompromising Calvinism of an earlier generation was regarded somewhat contemptuously as 'high-flying', and the typical themes of Moderate preaching were "the duties of everyday honesty, charity, good neighbourhood . . . the/

the ideal virtue was sanctified commonsense."⁽¹⁾

Finally, the status of the ministry improved, as did their economic circumstances, and they were able to mix on a more intimate level with men of culture, who were also men of the world. This brought social prestige to the pulpit, rather than evangelical passion to preaching.

But there was another and darker side to the picture. There set in at the same time a long slow tide of pastoral neglect, particularly in the rural areas and in the new centres of industrial development, unprovided for in the old parish system. Morally was preached from the pulpits, but there was little mention of mission. Unpopular 'presentees' were thrust upon sullen congregations, and churches emptied. Remote parishes were either without ministers or were largely abandoned by 'absentees', and as a consequence religious observances often fell into disuse. While the gulf widened between church and people new voices from across the English Channel made themselves increasingly heard, questioning the authority of the Establishment, the justice/

(1) Soc. Life, Graham, vol. 2, p.96.

justice of the social system, and even the necessity of religious belief itself.

By the latter half of the century the various secessions had weakened the solidarity of the Church of Scotland, and besides the tensions and schisms within Presbyterianism, other significant influences were at work in the ecclesiastical life of the nation. John Wesley and George Whitefield made repeated visits to Scotland; and the latter, in particular, made a deep impression on the multitudes who flocked to hear him. Partly because of his Calvinism, and partly by reason of his emphatic refusal to be identified with any party within the Church, Whitefield was, on the whole, well received.

At the same time other groups appeared whose tenets were even more radical. The Glasites, and the more extreme Sandemanians, protested against the unscriptural authority of Church Courts, and against the necessity of secular or specialised training for the ministry. Although numerically insignificant, these sects nevertheless pioneered the principles of Independency/

Independency in Scotland, and demonstrated in practice the reality of the 'gathered' church. Thus we have a picture of the Church in Scotland in those days - a house divided against itself. Within the Establishment there was complacency and spiritual blindness to the true needs of the Scottish people. The Seceders were in a querulous state of discord. The tiny Independent groups had contracted out of any kind of social responsibility and were opposed to, and fundamentally distrusted, scholarship and culture. Masses of the common people were indifferent to religion. For them, it had become either a social ^{and} intellectual fashion parade for the wealthy and aristocratic, or the barren debatable ground of pedants. Wesley and Whitefield had made some impression, permanent indeed, but not widespread. What Scotland needed in that hour was to hear the Gospel proclaimed with urgency and power, by her own sons, who understood her character and need, and who would speak with authority to their own people, with simplicity and sincerity to the multitudes, and with culture/

culture and scholarship to the educated. Such a man was Greville Ewing.⁽¹⁾

He was born on the 27th April, 1767, in the historic parish of Greyfriars, Edinburgh.⁽²⁾ Apart from the few facts provided by his daughter (Mrs. Matheson) in her Memoir of her father published in London in 1847, six years after his death, there is little direct information concerning his early years. He knew neither poverty nor opulence in his upbringing. His father, Alexander,⁽³⁾ appears to have been representative of the best type of Edinburgh citizen - able and industrious. He was a teacher of mathematics in the city, and the author of several/

(1) Greville is not a Scottish name: indeed it is very unusual to find it in Scotland, particularly as early as the 18th Century. It is undoubtedly Norman in origin although authorities differ on the actual locality. It is likely that one of the Norman settlers in Britain bore the title 'of Greville', or it may simply be a variation of Grenville (Grandville).

(2) BIRTH: Edinburgh Parish Registers

ffryday 8th May 1767

Alexr. Ewing Schoolmaster in Old Grayffriers parish and Jacobina Lowis his spouse a Son named Grevile, witnesses Wm. Swanston Writing Master & Jas. Arnot Writer in Edr. the Child was born 27th Aprile last.

(3) For an account of his house see Appendix A.

several text-books on that subject.⁽¹⁾ He also took a lively interest in current affairs, and was sufficiently involved to be the author of a pamphlet critical of Tom Paine. In his family life he was a stern, though fundamentally, kindly, man. His eight children, of whom Greville was the youngest, followed their father's example throughout their lives in quiet, if undistinguished, character and conscientiousness. Two daughters died unmarried, early in life. The eldest son, Alexander, went to the West Indies as a school teacher. On his return home he was ordained in the Church of England and eventually became rector of several parishes in the Bermudas. The other son, William, also went south, where he became a skilled surgeon's instrument maker. Of the daughters, one married a clergyman of the Church of England, and the other two married army officers.

The year 1773 proved to be a critical one for young Greville. After a lingering illness of fourteen months, his mother died. This event must have had a profound effect on the sensitive six-year-old boy, for he had already begun to take a serious turn of mind.

At/

(1) See Appendix B.

At this early age, he knew the sorrow of losing a loved one, and in this experience he had much in common with Robert and James Haldane. It is a curious sidelight on the story of these men that they should each know in early boyhood the grief of a mother's death.⁽¹⁾

In the same year (1773) Greville Ewing was sent to the Royal High School. The rough-and-tumble of school life in those days has been described by Lockhart in his "Life of Scott", and it proved too much for the young scholar. He received an injury to his foot that kept him at home for eleven months, part of which he spent at the seaside village of Cramond on the Forth. It was during his stay here that his father introduced him to his second wife, the new Mrs. Ewing. This relationship proved to be one of the most important in his life. The boy met more than a new mother, he met a spiritual guide, who made religion real to him. It was through her that he came under the indirect influence of the evangelist Whitefield. At one of his open-air meetings in the Orphan Park (George Heriot's) she 'came to a knowledge of the truth'. Whitefield visited Edinburgh fourteen/

(1) Haldanes, p. 14.

fourteen times from 1741 onwards, the last occasion being in 1768, and there is no evidence to show when Mrs. Ewing had her experience. But as a result of it, the growing boy heard in these impressionable years not only of the Gospel preached under the open sky, but learned of one whose passion for the souls of men over-reached the barriers of denominational bigotry.⁽¹⁾ As a result of her decided opinions the family left Greyfriars to worship at Lady Glenorchy's Chapel in Niddry's Wynd. The consequences of this transfer were far-reaching for Ewing, and had a lasting effect upon the future course of his public and his domestic life. It is part of the strange pattern of events that Lady Glenorchy founded this chapel in 1770 with the active co-operation, and possibly on the suggestion of, the widowed Lady D'Arcy Maxwell, herself a dedicated philanthropist, and aunt of Ewing's future wife, Barbara Maxwell of Pollok.

Little is known of the later years of his boyhood.

Mrs./

(1) "O how I do long to see bigotry and party-zeal taken away, and all the Lord's servants more knit together. I wish all names among the Saints of God were swallowed up in that one of Christian." (Whitefield, Letter cxx, p. 286. "Memoir of Whitefield", Gillies. J.)

Mrs. Matheson suggests that he returned to the High School,⁽¹⁾ but it is clear that an affectionate relationship in faith and study developed between Greville and Alexander, his brother, who was attending the University 1775-7. Not only did the older boy coach the younger in his studies, but seems to have encouraged him to think of the ministry, though this ambition was either unknown to, or disregarded by, his father. Eventually Ewing left school and became an indentured apprentice to a seal engraver.

The years that followed were burdensome, but by no means wasted. The craft of the seal engraver called for special qualities of patience and concentration, as well as considerable artistic skill. In this occupation, he could be serving the upper classes of Scottish society. His trade would enable him to have a detailed knowledge of the family crests and heraldic devices of the land-owners and nobility. At the same time he continued his home studies under the tuition of his/

(1). Where he was in the same Latin class as John Campbell and James Haldane, who was one of the top boys in this subject. Ewing as 'middling', although fourteen months older. - Life of Haldanes (p.20). One of the features of the High School education of that day was that the sons of the aristocracy mingled freely with the sons of the poorest in the playground and classroom.

his brother. Thus developed that intensity of purpose that characterised the future course of his life. Partly as a result of the eye-strain all this involved he suffered a serious illness in his sixteenth year, and his father seems to have made some attempt to terminate his apprenticeship. Ewing did however finish his time, and at the age of nineteen became a fully qualified seal-engraver. Although now free from his contract, he did not immediately proceed with his plans for the ministry. For over a year he worked at his trade on his own account, until in October, 1787, he told his father that he proposed to take up studies at the University that session, with a view to the ministry. Two reasons may have dictated this delay. He may have sought to make some provision toward his expenses. Or, more probably sensing his father's opposition, he may have preferred to delay till he reached his twenty-first year, determined, if necessary, to go ahead without parental sanction. He did not misjudge his father's attitude. Mr. Ewing was totally opposed to this venture of his son's, but such was his basic kindness - and was not Greville his Benjamin? - that/

that he actually surprised the young man by paying the class fees for his first year.

The five years of his attendance at University are largely hidden. The scant information available is provided by his biographer who lists his class tickets.⁽¹⁾ He helped to maintain himself by undertaking tutorial work, and in May, 1788, he entered the service of James Lockhart of Cambusnethan. During one year he was Prizeman in the Logic class. As his studies and tutorial duties permitted, he shared in the work at Lady Glenorchy's, and helped Lady Maxwell in her work among the poor. Of this/

(1) He studied Greek under Prof. Andrew Dalzell, Logic with Prof. James Findlayson, Nat. Phil. with John Robinson, M.A., Moral Phil. with Prof. Dugald Stewart, Ecclesiastical History with Dr. Thomas Hardy, Dr. Andrew Hunter was Professor of Divinity. Of these teachers Dugald Stewart as perhaps the most remarkable. A young man of brilliance and versatility, he succeeded to the Chair of Philosophy at the age of 34, after ten years' occupancy of the Chair of Mathematics. But he was equally at home lecturing in the Greek, Logic or Rhetoric classrooms. He was renowned for the pleasantness and persuasion of his delivery, and for the fluency and grace of his prose. ("Scottish Men of Letters", Graham, p. 425). When Ewing attended his class, Stewart was at the height of his powers. Ewing's subsequent preaching and writing reveal clearly that he learned well from his teacher. Dr. Hardy's influence may have been considerable in another direction. In contrast to the prevailing views of his time he advocated missions to the heathen in at least one published sermon. (Mem. Matheson, p. 16).

this period we have little further information. A letter from Rev. Robert Lorimer, printed in the Memoir, provides a pleasing picture of a kindly and intelligent fellow-student, but as this is a recollection written after an interval of many years, we cannot accept it as a realistic account of his character.

We know, however, that these quiet years of his education were important ones for Edinburgh and for Scotland. The Capital was bursting the confines of her ancient boundaries, and a new way of life was emerging. But more than the city was changing. New and apparently dangerous ideas of democracy were everywhere abroad, and multiplying. Old established institutions were being challenged. Within the Church itself were stirrings of new life, inarticulate as yet, but waiting for an authoritative lead. The young seal-engraver turned student prayed and studied and waited for the day when God would call him to labour again, no longer to cut the fleeting symbols of human dignity upon the die of steel, but to engrave upon the hearts of men the Cross of Christ the Everlasting King.

SECTION 11 - CALL TO MINISTRY

In 1792 Greville Ewing completed his studies at Edinburgh University, and returned to take up his tutorial duties in Cambusnethan, near Wishaw. On the 25th September of that year he appeared before Hamilton Presbytery, and successfully answering the required questions, he was licensed to preach. The following Sunday he preached as a licenciate of the Establishment in the parish church of East Kilbride. At this time he was 25 years of age.

The summer over, he returned to his father's home in Edinburgh to await the guidance of God concerning his future, and his call to service in the Ministry. That call was not long delayed, and it came from an unexpected quarter. In November the Rev. Thomas Snell Jones, (afterwards Dr.), the minister of Lady Glenorchy's Chapel, Edinburgh, invited him to be his assistant. It was a tribute to his ability to be asked to serve in the church to which his parents belonged and in which he had been reared.

The church to which he was called presented at that time a novel type of church order and polity, and the/

the story of its origins and its unique tradition must have had a considerable influence on the development of Ewing's thought.⁽¹⁾ Perhaps most important was the unusual position of the church in its relationship to the Establishment. To Dr. Jones, the first minister, the arrangement was reasonable and practical. He had, at one and the same time, a fair measure of congregational freedom, guaranteed by the Trust Deeds and constitution, and also an undisputed constitutional link, in terms of order and discipline, with the courts of the Church of Scotland. To Ewing, on the other hand, Lady Glenorchy's appeared a half-way house in ecclesiastical development. His logical mind could not be satisfied with it. If it was right to come thus far in separation from the National Church, and in independent congregational organisation, was it not therefore reasonable to suppose that a farther step required to be taken - that of complete separation from the Establishment and withdrawal from the jurisdiction of the very courts in which they were in fact unrepresented? Reinforcing logic was the testimony of Scripture, and during these years of his ministry at the chapel, he sought to discover a biblical and practical answer to the problem of church government.

From/
(1) SEE APPENDIX C.

From the point of view of theology, Ewing found the church's position agreeable to his own soul - soundly Calvinistic. His step-mother had been a convert of Whitefield; the founder of the chapel had resisted Mr. Wesley's doctrines, sending his preachers about their business; and his minister had been personally selected by Lady Glenorchy for the soundness of his teaching. It was, however, the evangelical brand of Calvinism that leaned more to the urgency of the field preachers, than to the academies of debate. The church was a stronghold of evangelism, the original design of the founder.

" she had watched the struggle then going on between the two great parties in the Establishment; and seeing that evangelism had the worse in the contest, and that it was still sinking, she had built her Edinburgh chapel in the hope of furnishing it with a lodging place in which in its time of depression and defeat it might find shelter."

(Edinburgh and its Neighbourhood. Miller, p.167)

It continued to be a centre of prayer and evangelistic effort, especially as the Disruption struggle drew nearer.

So keen was the new minister to uphold the doctrinal standards of his church that one of his first publications was an article in the Evangelical Magazine/

Magazine entitled "A Comparative View of Calvinism and Arminianism", in 1794. The closing sentences foreshadow his future controversies:

"Let men search for truth, and declare ingenuously the result of their enquiries. Let them love their antagonists in debate, as well as their enemies in war. But that man who affects to treat a controversy, like the one we have been reviewing, as a matter of indifference, if he is not ignorant, seems to be either courting popularity, or seeking to excuse his indolence and want of religion."

(Mem. Matheson, p. 629)

From the beginning of his ministry Ewing had a pastoral concern for people. The doors of his church were open to folk of all classes, and the poor were especially welcome in the hundreds of free seats that had been provided at Lady Glenorchy's desire. He understood how people lived, he respected their intelligence, and above all, he cared for them.

One other important aspect of his upbringing and eventual ministry in the chapel must be mentioned. All his life he had been under the influence of the English evangelicals. Many of them had preached in Lady Glenorchy's and the names of others were revered household/

household words - Whitefield, of course, but also Bogue, Bennett, Fuller, Simeon, Romaine, Newton, Haweis and Hill. Ewing was in the mid-stream of the current of new life that was pulsing up from South of the Border.

"The force which had recently arisen in the Church of England to fill the place vacated by Puritanism in 1662 may almost be regarded as a new creation, and was still so to speak in the bloom of youth. In the Scottish Church, on the other hand, where it embodied an ancient and unbroken tradition, Evangelicalism was rather venerable than robust."

(Church and Reform in Scotland, 1797-1843,
Mathieson, p. 50.)

This force, more than any other contemporary Scottish influence dominated the early years of Ewing's ministry, and that same force, acting upon the Haldane brothers while they were in England, threw the trio together in the Mission to Bengal.

SECTION III - THE RAVELLING STRANDS

One of the remarkable features of the revival of religion in Scotland in the last years of the 18th Century was the way in which the leaders of that movement were, without preconcerted intention, gradually drawn together in a common concern. It was no haphazard association, but one which emerged step by step out of a complex of relationships in a providential pattern. Those principally involved were Robert and James Haldane, the Rev. William Innes, then assistant minister of Dundee West Church, the Rev. David Bogue of Gosport, and the Rev. Greville Ewing - a company of men vastly different, as we shall see, in temperament, experience of life and social position, yet from boyhood, all unknown to each other, they were being steadily guided through the unfolding years, till their separate lives converged in the unity and resolve of the grand missionary enterprise.

Following upon the death of Lady Lundie in May, 1777, her grandchildren, Robert and James Haldane, had to leave her home in Dundee, and in September of that year they came to Edinburgh to live as boarders with the rector of the High School, Dr. Adam, in his house in/

in Charles Street, off George Square. In their few years of life the lads had known sorrow. In spite of their comfortable circumstances they had not been sheltered from bereavement. In 1768 their father, in 1774 their mother, and two years later their only sister aged 11, all died, and they were brought up by their grandmother at Lundie House, near Dundee.

Education at the High School in those days was primitive, harsh and restricted. Cockburn says of the period,

"Out of the whole four years of my attendance there were probably not ten days I was not flogged at least once Oh, the bodily and mental wearisomeness of sitting six hours a day staring idly at a page, without motion and without thought, and trembling at the gradual approach of the merciless giant . . ."

(Cockburn's Memoir, p.4)

The Haldane brothers were older when they enrolled at this juvenile penitentiary. Robert was 13 and James 9. Consequently they were perhaps more fitted to withstand the rigours⁽¹⁾ of a 7 o'clock start, and the uncongenial atmosphere/

(1) "The general tone of the school was vulgar and harsh. Among the boys coarseness of language and manners was the only fashion Nothing evidently civilised was safe. Two of the masters in particular were so savage, that any master doing now what they did every hour would certainly be transported."

(Cockburn's Mem, p.10)

atmosphere than young Greville Ewing, who passed through its portals when he was six. As a result of an illness his progress was retarded, and so he found himself in the same class with James Haldane.

A further connection is to be found in the Haldanes' relationship with their French teacher, Dr. Cauvin, whose home they regularly visited, and with whom they were accustomed to go on outings to the country, when nothing but French was spoken. Mr. Cauvin lived in the Bishops Land, ~~and~~ also the home of Greville Ewing's father. It can be assumed that even as boys the lives of these three crossed and recrossed in the playground of the High School Yards, in the wynds of the Old Town, and even on the narrow stairs of the Bishop's Land Close. ⁽¹⁾

But during these boyhood years there seemed little prospect that the relationship between the Haldanes and Ewing would ever become more intimate. They were the sons of an ancient house that had been involved in the/

(1) During the winter of 1786-7 Robert Burns visited the Bishop's Land three times a week at 9 p.m. for French lessons from Louis Cauvin, jr., son of the original teacher. (The Royal Mile, Skinner, p. 48). Greville Ewing, then a student at the University, must have rubbed shoulders many times with the poet, then at the height of his lionization by Edinburgh society.

the shaping of the nation's history. They had all the advantages that wealth and influence and aristocratic connections could provide. They had every prospect of a brilliant career in whatever suitable occupation they might choose, (Robert had had some notion of the ministry as a boy, but had been dissuaded, as not being a proper calling for a gentleman.) Ewing, on the other hand, the youngest son of a self-made teacher of mathematics, bound apprentice on the very threshold of his teens to a steel-engraver, seemed already set on a divergent path into an industrious obscurity for the rest of his life.

After leaving school Robert Haldane entered Edinburgh University in 1779, but the call of the sea was strong. Before the session ended he forsook his studies for the more boisterous discipline of the quarterdeck, and received a commission in the Royal Navy, joining H.M.S. Monarch as she lay at Portsmouth. In this decision he was following family footsteps, for his mother's brother was the renowned Admiral Duncan. As a result of the Admiral's ill-health in tropical waters he retained a command at home, and secured his young/

young nephew's appointment to H.M.S. Foudroyant, in transfer from the Monarch, which was bound for the West Indies station. Across the Solent from Portsmouth lay the large village of Gosport (pop. 5,000), a typical sailors' town, and here for eight years, 1779-1787, Admiral Lord Duncan had his headquarters while he was attached to the Channel Fleet. Here, too, lived the Rev. David Bogue, ministering to the Independent Church and supervising his academy. As a consequence, Lt. Robert Haldane had many opportunities during his frequent shore leave to form a friendship with the Scots minister and to be much influenced by him, not only in his choice of reading, but also in the direction of his thought.

James Haldane, left behind in Edinburgh, by the departure of both his brother and uncle, went to sea four years later, in 1784. Instead of entering the Navy, however, he engaged in a more lucrative line with the East India Company, and made, in all, four voyages to the Far East. He, too, was impressed by the forthright and dedicated personality of Dr. Bogue..

"I/

"I lived on board ship nearly four months at Portsmouth, and having much spare time, and being always fond of reading, I was employed in this way, and began, more from a conviction of its propriety than any real concern about eternity, to read the Bible and religious books, not only on the Sabbath, but a portion of Scripture every day. I also began to pray to God, although almost entirely about the concerns of a present world. During all this time I did not go on shore to public worship above once or twice, though I could have done so, and heard the Gospel with the same form of worship (at Dr. Bogue's) as in Scotland. At length some impression seemed to be made on my mind, that all was not right, and knowing that the Lord's Supper was to be dispensed, I was desirous of being admitted, and went and spoke with Dr. Bogue on the subject. He put some books into my hands on the nature of the ordinance which I read, and was more regular in prayer and attending public worship I was sure I was not right. I had never joined at the Lord's Supper, being formerly restrained partly by conscience, while living in open sin, and partly by want of convenient opportunity However dark my mind still was, I have no doubt but that God began a work of grace on my soul while living on board the Melville Castle."

(Haldane, p.70)

The minister who had made such a profound impression on the two brothers was born in Coldingham in 1750, and had attended school at Eyemouth and at Duns. He graduated M.A. from Edinburgh University, and then took the divinity course. Being dissatisfied with the method/

method of presentation to charges then practised in the Church of Scotland, he went to London, as so many young Scotsmen were doing at that time. He found employment as a tutor for some years before being called to the church at Gosport. He was a man distinguished by practical holiness of life, wide reading and strong Independent and evangelical convictions. Single-handed he conducted an academy for the training of young men for the missionary fields and for the home ministry. He was one of the most eloquent pioneers of the London Missionary Society, but was also deeply concerned for the spread of the Gospel at home. He was responsible for organising a scheme for evangelistic work throughout the county of Hampshire. Although he virtually became an Englishman by adoption, through his concern with the religious affairs of that country, he never forgot his links with his native land. He returned repeatedly north of the border, preaching in such pulpits as were opened to him, lecturing and evangelising in the open air.

"It as most natural then that when in 1779 Bogue made one of his journeys back to his home country his diary should mention that he filled the pulpits of Mr. Walker, Dr. Erskine, Mr. Jones and Dr. Hunter."

(Fathers & Founders, Morison, p. 169)

Thus/

Thus it is highly probable that Greville Ewing, when only a boy of 12 or 13, heard David Bogue preach, either while the family was still at Greyfriars, or subsequently at Lady Glenorchy's. From that time, certainly, the name would be familiar to him, and the ideas he had disseminated taking root in his mind.

When the war with France ended in 1783, Lt. Haldane was still only nineteen years of age, but he had seen much hard service, and faced frequent danger. The more placid routine of peace-time held no further attraction for him and he resigned his commission. However, such was his friendship with Dr. Bogue, that he remained for several months in Gosport studying under his guidance, before returning to Scotland, there to attend classes at Edinburgh University during session '83-84. In the following summer he returned south for a reunion and spent some weeks in company with Dr. Bogue and another young man, touring in the Netherlands and visiting Paris. Much of his later democratic sympathies can be traced to this period, both to the influence of Dr. Bogue's conversation, and ^{to} his own eye-witness experience of the pauperised degradation of the French people in the last feverish decade of Bourbon tyranny.

The/

The influence of David Bogue upon the two young brothers was an important one, and although their ways seemed to part in 1784, the brothers marrying and settling down to the life of country landowners, they never forgot their strong and serious counsellor in holy things. It was to Bogue first of all that Robert Haldane turned twelve years later and disclosed the beginnings of his plan to take the Gospel to India on a massive scale, seeking not only his guidance but his company in the project.

The final link in this curiously interwoven chain of human relationships is William Innes, minister at Dundee and chaplain to Stirling Castle. His great-grandfather had been a wine-merchant in Leith in the 17th Century, and from that time there had been an unbroken succession of ministers drawn from the family in the Church of Scotland. His grandfather, James, graduated from Edinburgh University in 1704, and was rector of Hawick High School before becoming minister of the parish of Mertoun, 1710-67. His father, James, was the minister of Yester Parish at Gifford, 1760-1821. He is the author of the quaint parish account -

"The/

"The children in general are not so stout as they were forty years ago; which must be owing in a great measure to the different manner of living; as the common people now drink a great deal of tea, and not good small beer, which they did fifty years ago."

(Sinclair's Stat. Ac. vol. 1. p. 345)

In setting out the occupations of the inhabitants of the parish he proudly lists "divinity student, 1" - his own son, William, at that time at Edinburgh University. In the same way he reveals something of his own sorrows when he says mildly that -

"the air is pure and very healthy; and no particular distemper is prevalent in the parish; though it has been observed that, of late years, consumptions have been more frequent than usual in this part of the country."

(Stat. Ac. 1, p. 342)

This was surely the mournful voice of experience, for of his five children, only one, William, lived to mature years. James died at 6, Jean at 17, Christian at 6 months, and Anne, who was to be Greville Ewing's young wife, died of this same consumption after only nine months of marriage at the age of 19. The romantic attachment between the two must have begun as a result of the friendship which sprang up between the two students while/

while they were attending classes at Edinburgh University 1787-92. William Innes was three years younger than Ewing, who had made a later start upon his studies as a result of the years of his apprenticeship. Innes was first assistant minister in Stirling West Kirk, having been elected by the magistrates, and then was additionally appointed chaplain to Stirling Castle.

The Acting-Deputy Governor of the Castle was Major Alexander Joass, who had received the appointment as a result of his disablement for active service through rheumatic fever. Although a semi-invalid for nearly 30 years he -

"made the old palace at Stirling Castle famed for its hospitality."

(Haldane, p.63)

On September 18th, 1793, James Haldane married the only daughter of Major Joass, and thus the young Indiaman adventurer and the equally young minister sprung from a staid line of country ministers were thrown together at a most important moment in both their lives, the one entering upon his marriage, and the other upon his ministry.

In the summer of 1794 Ewing made a tour of England/

England in the company of William Innes, and in November of the same year was married to his sister Anne.

Innes was soon on intimate terms with both Haldanes, and particularly with Robert, who during the year 1795 was resolving the tensions in his political and religious outlook. It was Innes who made the original introductions between Robert Haldane and Greville Ewing, of which event Ewing has left the following impressions:

"In the year 1795 I was induced to accept of an invitation from Mr. Haldane of Airthrey, and accompanied him to that gentleman's place. I was assured he was a man of very superior talents and information, much given to inquiry and though not decidedly serious, yet in a promising state of mind, being desirous of religious conversation and remarkably candid and open to conviction."

(Facts, Documents, Ewing, p.5)

It was William Innes also who first directed Robert Haldane's thinking along the lines of missionary endeavour. While in Stirling he received the first number of the Periodical Accounts of the Baptist Mission in India, and gave it to Haldane who was then living at Airthrey. He was much impressed with the news, and by -

"the purity of the motives which had induced Dr. Carey to quit his native land and to make known the Gospel in foreign parts."

(Haldane, p.95)

Thus/

Thus for nearly half a century the strands of five individual human lives had been ravelling together in the purpose of God. Now at last the cord was complete. It was to be tested to destruction in the tensions that were to follow, and its strength and its weakness were to be revealed before the eyes of men.

SECTION IV - AT LADY GLENORCHY'S.

On Sunday, 25th November, 1792, Greville Ewing preached his first sermon in Lady Glenorchy's Church on the invitation of the minister, Rev. T.S. Jones. After the elders had consulted with the heads of families in their various districts a unanimous invitation was sent to him to become the assistant minister. On accepting this call he began his ministry on the first Sunday of 1793, and such was the favourable impression he created that nine months later on 17th October he was ordained as colleague, or second minister, to Mr. Jones. From the outset his life was fully occupied with a wide variety of religious interests. Besides his regular preaching duties at Lady Glenorchy's, where he alternated with Mr. Jones in the pulpit, he supplied other churches in the neighbourhood. He regularly visited " a large and flourishing boarding school for young/

young ladies,"⁽¹⁾ for the purposes of religious instruction. Three nights a week he was engaged in public catechising, where signs of his gift for lucid exposition were clearly evidenced. There was also^a/young people's meeting for singing practice. His Sunday evenings were often spent teaching the children at Lady Maxwell's school,

"established in 1770 for the purpose of affording education and Christian instruction to poor children Its sole management and superintendence remained with herself Her Ladyship was particularly careful to admit none as masters, but men of undoubted piety each child unless dismissed on account of improper conduct, went through a regular course of instruction for three years; and at the expiration of that period, a Bible was presented"

(The Life of D'Arcy, Lady Maxwell of Pollock; late of Edinburgh; completed from her voluminous diary and correspondence and from other authentic documents; by Rev. John Lancaster, 1821, p. 86)

These early years of his ministry were undoubtedly influenced by the example and counsel of his senior colleague, Mr. Jones, then at the height of his powers. This minister occupied a prominent place among the clergy of the city, and was much in the public eye. Mention has been made of his background,⁽²⁾ and he obviously brought the emphases and accents of English Dissent to bear upon contemporary Scottish preaching.

"Dr./

(1) Mem. Ewing, p. 38.

(2) SEE APPENDIX C.

"Dr. Jones has long been considered as a master in the art of arrangement he is uniformly scriptural, but betrays none of that fearfulness and frigorific influence of much of our modern preaching In his sermons there is a certain intrepidity both in his selection of topics and in the free and original way in which he handles them he is far above the tame, insipid, servile monotony of ordinary sermon writers his views, and his thoughts and his modes of illustration, appear to be no sooner conceived, than he is able to transfer them at once upon his hearers, through the channel of contemporaneous communication."

(Sketches of the Edinburgh Clergy of the Established Church of Scotland, by John Anderson, 1832. p.p. 78-9)

The apprentice preacher learned well from his instructor, for Ewing's writing as well as his preaching are characertised by pointedness and clarity.

Along with Dr. Baird of the University, Jones accompanied to the Scaffold Robert Watt, condemned for treason in the 'Friends of the People' agitation that followed the French Revolution. (1)

This case caused a stir. Watt had been connected with several churches in the city, and had been/

(1) See the "Declaration and Confession of Robert Watt, written, subscribed and delivered by himself the evening before his execution for High Treason at Edinburgh, October 15th, 1794, attested by the Rev. Dr. Baird and Rev. T.S. Jones, one of the ministers of Lady Glenorchy's Chapel".

been a manager in one of them for some time. Thus Greville Ewing was involved in the sensational events of his day, and conceived a horror of political controversy. John Newton expressed a similar abhorrence in a letter to John Campbell, eighteen months previously in a letter dated 3/1/93;

"If I were to add another article to our Litany, it might be this:- 'From poison and politics, Good Lord, deliver me' I think a political spirit as hurtful to the life of God in the soul, as poison is to the bodily frame"

(Letters and Conversational Remarks by the late Rev. John Newton, Rector of Saint Mary's Woolnoth, Lombard Street, London; during the last Eighteen Years of his Life, Ed. by John Campbell, 1809, Letter vi, p. 11)

"Kay's Portraits" include an engraving of Greville Ewing, executed about this time. The half-profile reveals fine features, the brow is lofty, the nose straight, the mouth well-shaped, the eyes dark and wide-set. Kay actually mentions in the accompanying pen-portrait that he was good-looking;

"In his younger days his countenance is said to have been very handsome; and even now (1837) in his seventieth year it is highly prepossessing."

(Kay's Portraits, Vol. 1, p.195)

With/

With such an appearance, and with his ability, it was not long before Ewing's name was brought forward in connection with vacancies. He was regarded by the Evangelical party as a young man of promise, ready for a parish of his own. In the late summer of 1794 he was offered the parish of St. Madoes in Perthshire. The vacancy had occurred as a result of the translation of Rev. David Black to Lady Yester's Church in Edinburgh. The patron, Mr. Richardson of Pitfour, had been informed of Ewing's suitability by the departing incumbent, and was therefore eager to secure his services as successor. Although the parish was a small one numerically,⁽¹⁾ it was a centre of evangelistic preaching for the surrounding countryside. The Presbytery were hostile to evangelicals and in ~~a~~very few years were to deal mercilessly with James Garie, in a notorious case.

It is inter^esting to notice how much pressure was brought to bear upon Greville Ewing to accept the presentation. Not only did David Black urge him repeatedly, but he also solicited the impressive support of/

(1) "The number of souls residing in the parish is about three hundred they are rather perhaps of a phlegmatic than a sprightly disposition."

of the Rev. Walter Buchanan of the Canongate, the friend and fellow-itinerant of Charles Simeon of Cambridge who thought "it was one of his greatest blessings to have known him."⁽¹⁾ The Rev. John Lockhart,⁽²⁾ who knew him intimately from his Cambusnethan days, was also drawn in to add his support to the proposition.

In spite of this unanimity among his advisers, Ewing refused their guidance. He resisted all their arguments with a determination that characterised the subsequent course of his life. He reveals himself throughout these protracted negotiations as a man of independent mind, regarding the kindly interventions of his friends as little as the threatenings and slanders of his enemies. Had he been less rigid in his decisions, he might well have saved himself much suffering, but had he been more amenable to persuasion, the early Congregational churches might have been bereft of his strong leadership.

"I/

(1) Memoir of the Life of Rev. Charles Simeon, M.A. Ed. William Carus, M.A., p. 115)

(2) While Lockhart was writing to Ewing, a child was born in the Cambusnethan manse. That boy was to be the son-in-law and biographer of Sir Walter Scott.

"I can truly say, in your own words, were I to consult my own advantage and personal comfort, I should certainly prefer it (St. Madoes). . ."

(Mem. Matheson, p. 46)

he wrote to David Black in final refusal. What then were the motives that influenced him in this decision?

Obviously he must have found his ministry in Edinburgh congenial. Not only was he closely associated with the leading clerical figures of the day, both in the Established and in the Secession Churches, but he was also co-pastor of one of the best known evangelical congregations in the city. It would be a regular experience for him to preach to two thousand hearers.⁽¹⁾ Moreover, he had recently become engaged to be married and was preparing his new home in Rose Court, the first of the buildings in the new town.⁽²⁾

But his refusal of the call to St. Madoes was prompted by more than a desire to remain in a pleasant situation. There appears to be also an implicit reluctance/

(1) Rev. Charles Simeon records in his journal:
"10th July, 1796. I had to preach a sermon in Lady Glenorchy's Chapel; there were about three thousand people in it"

(Mem. of C.S., p. 125)

(2). So difficult was it at the very first to induce men to build that a premium of 20 pounds was offered by the magistrate to him who should raise the first house; it was awarded to Mr. John Young on account of a mansion erected by him in Rose Court, George Street."

(Tradition of Edinburgh, Chambers, p.7)

reluctance to accept a call under the terms of patronage, even though it came from an evangelical. He cherished the fact that he owed his ministry at Lady Glenorchy's to the unanimous invitation of the church. It is clear, also, that even at this time he had strong doubts about the standards of membership and communion in the Established Church. In sermons of this period he spoke of the church as spiritual rather than institutional, and urged a more scriptural form of discipline. In Lady Glenorchy's it was a reasonable proposition to attempt to put such an idea into practice, but in a tiny charge like St. Madoes in the face of an indifferent countryside and a hostile Moderate Presbytery, there appeared little prospect of success.

In the spring of 1794 Greville Ewing visited England for the first time on a seven week tour in company with Rev. William Innes, his friend of college days. His biographer says in a footnote (p. 56), that "it is probable that during this visit he met John Newton", and if this is so, it would most likely have been upon the introduction of Mr. John Campbell, the large-hearted, busy little Edinburgh ironmonger:

"There/

"There was perhaps not another tradesman in Scotland who occupied a similar position with himself. No man in the University, nor in the pulpits of Edinburgh, was so early or so intimately acquainted with English Churchmen or Dissenters, who originated the great societies which are now the glory of Britain. What Mr. Newton wrote to him in 1793 - 'I constitute you my agent at Edinburgh, and solicit to be your agent in London' - was a compliment paid to him by not a few of the fathers and founders of liberal things."

(The Life, Times and Missionary Enterprises
of the Rev. John Campbell, by Robert Philip,
1841, p. 95)

In the volume of John Newton's letters and conversations published by Campbell in 1809, the fruit of this relationship, Newton does not mention his having met Ewing in 1794, but there are several references to visitors from Scotland carrying introductions from Campbell. In the following year, however, and subsequently, Ewing's name occurs in the correspondence several times in a way that suggests that the two men met on this first visit. In London he found an atmosphere of spiritual earnestness, gospel ardour and intellectual clarity that appealed to him. Having experienced such fellowship he was more than ever dissatisfied with the cold formality and evangelical indifference/

indifference of the Established Church.

Later in that year Greville Ewing was married, on the 13th of November, to nineteen-year-old Ann Innes, daughter of the minister of the parish of Gifford, and only sister of his friend William Innes. For the greater part of her brief married life of nine months she suffered from consumption, and although she was taken to health resorts and underwent the treatments of the time, all was in vain. She died on 23rd August, 1795.

Scarcely a fortnight after her death he published privately a brief account of his marriage, a description of his wife's illness and a verbatim report of her deathbed testimony. Although his grief is apparent in this document, so also is the concern of the preacher. The pamphlet had a purpose. He concluded:

"I invite all my brethren in Christ, especially the feeble-minded, to encourage themselves in the Lord their God; and I ask the thoughtless and the profligate, (beseeching them seriously to consider the question,) 'Have any worldly men or women a death like this?'"

(Mem. Matheson, p.62)

The soul-winner in him knew well the impact of such a publication. Eight months previously he had written to the editors of the Evangelical Magazine commending their work:

"The/

"The essays the articles of biography, religious intelligence, and diving experience, have ever been to me particularly interesting."

(Mem. Matheson, p. 55)

John Newton sent his sympathy, though his message was a little tinged with the self-pity of the elderly:

"I thank you for the printed papers (probably including Ewing's memoir). I can feel for Mr. E. But he is a young man. I hope the Lord will heal his wound, and perhaps in due time the breach may be comfortably repaired. Had they lived so long together as my dear wife and I did, in harmony, as I believe they would; the separating stroke would have been no less keen after forty years than in the first. And then it is probable, that he, if the survivor, must have lived a solitary like me, for the rest of his days"

(Newton's Letters, 8th October, 1795. p. 85)

The year 1795 marked more than the termination of his brief marriage. It was the end for Greville Ewing of the quiet years of his preparation. From that time on, his life was to bear the scrutiny of men in praise and blame as he was drawn into the swift-moving interacting events that ushered in a new era in Scottish religious life. The transition was as sudden as it was complete. As he stood at the graveside of his wife he was known to

a/

a few as a promising young minister, but to most he was as yet unknown. By the end of 1796 he was to be the secretary of the Edinburgh Missionary Society, the editor of an immensely popular religious periodical the "Missionary Magazine", and partner in one of the most ambitious religious projects that had ever been laid before the public - the Mission to Bengal. That he was able to meet this surge of new responsibility was the mark of his maturity.

CHAPTER TWOSECTION I - THE EDINBURGH MISSIONARY SOCIETY

The formation of the Edinburgh Missionary Society was the result of a variety of factors which ultimately coalesced in a new experiment in Scottish religious life. The social customs of the century, of course, lent themselves to such a development. It was the age of the club, and of conversational elegance. Not to be a 'clubbable' man was, in Dr. Johnson's opinion, a serious defect in character. The coffee-house became a rival to the tavern as the centre of good company, where like-minded men gathered to discuss every subject under the sun. It is not, therefore, surprising that similar trends are to be found in the religious life of the time.

Charles Simeon has left a pleasant account of the conduct of such a group that regularly met in Edinburgh.

"Monday, 6th June, 1796. Mr. Buchanan carried me to Mr. Dickson's for tea. It was the monthly meeting of a few friends to which they did me the favour to admit me. After tea they retired to a room, and having prayed, read the Greek Testament (Ro. vi) with useful criticisms and observations. We then prayed again, and walked after ards till the time for family prayers. The ministers/

ministers were Messrs. Dickson, Buchanan, Jones (an Englishman, but of the Scotch Church in Edinburgh), Paul and Black. We afterwards supped together and spent a very profitable and pleasant evening."

(Mem. of Simeon, Canus, p. 116)

One of the permanent results of Wesley's and Whitefield's preaching was the renewed emphasis upon the place of prayer. Many pledged themselves to regular prayer covenants, not only in their private devotions, but also in company with the like-minded.

The intention behind these meetings was excellent, but the purpose was too generalised to kindle creative enthusiasm. Certainly all serious people could see that the world was in a turmoil, and Christians everywhere were bound to pray, but what could they do? The prayers seemed powerless in the face of the tremendous events of the time.

"April 3, 1795. Still prospects are gloomy respecting public affairs; but since last date, I have had the comfort of a spirit of prayer. Meetings for prayer are prevailing in many parts . . . among various denominations, who are all heartily uniting in supplicating a throne of grace for mercy in these troublesome and perilous times;"

(Life of Lady Maxwell, vol ii., p. 261)

The/

The growing interest in missionary enterprise provided a practical outlet for the zeal generated in these prayer associations, and provided a new basis of unity upon which Christians of all denominations could pray and plan and serve and give, together.

In England, among the different denominations, opinion was steadily moving toward the conviction that missionary endeavour was a necessary part of the church's responsibility. For many years the Moravians had quietly pioneered in this work, spreading the Gospel among the Indian tribes in the forests of North America.

The Baptist mission, initiated by William Carey in the face of many difficulties, had attracted much attention among the general public, but more important was the resultant co-operation in supporting the project among church people at home. Reviewing the progress of the mission after sixteen years the Annual Report of 1810 says:

"Christians of different denominations discovered a common bond of affection; and instead of always dwelling on things where-on they differed, found their account in uniting in those things where-in they agreed."

(Brief Narrative of the Baptist Mission
in India, 1810, p., preface)

In/

In 1788 a move was afoot to set up an Anglican mission in Benares, and the chaplains in India solicited the help of Charles Simeon to be their agent in England and to promote their interests. Newton and Wilberforce were also involved in the plan.⁽¹⁾

In the Church of England plans were far advanced to set up a pilot scheme to evangelise the British territories of India, some years before Carey's expedition.

Although this attempt came to nothing, Wilberforce remained undeterred. The renewal of the East India Company's charter in 1793 seemed to him an opportune moment in which to renew his agitation. In May of that year he moved before the House of Commons a general Missionary Resolution, together with several practical proposals to expedite it. At this stage his plans met with general approval, and he felt that victory was assured when Dundas promised his support.

In the interval between the readings of the Bill in the House, however, the Directors of the Company had met and had taken action. They had their own ideas about/

(1) Correspondence of Wilberforce, ed. by his sons, 1840, p.59.

about missionaries. (1) Wilberforce's diary for 24th May reveals how disappointed he was by the turn of events:

"I argued as strongly as I could my clauses thrown out - Dundas most false and double; but poor fellow! Much to be pitied! The East India Directors and proprietors have triumphed - all my clauses were struck out on the third reading of the Bill (with Dundas' consent!! This is honour) and our territories in Hindostan, 20 millions of people included, are left in the undisturbed and peaceable possession, and committed to the providential protection, of Brahma."

(Life of Wilberforce, vol. ii, p.24)

The body that eventually appeared to meet the need was the London Missionary Society. A meeting of Dissenting ministers in Warwick made the first practical suggestions in this respect. (2) Following upon a meeting on/

(1) A few years later Robert Haldane's plan received similar treatment, in spite of the considerable pressure that was brought to bear on the Government. Perhaps too much importance has been placed on Haldane's alleged political unfitness as a disqualifying factor, and not enough upon the sheer obstructionism of the East India Directors to the introduction of Christianity to the natives. Even a Wilberforce could make no impression on their hostility. Carey was contemptuously refused a passage to India on a Company ship. What hope had Haldane with his democratic taint - and a Scotsman to boot?

(2) History, Waddington, vol. iv. p.60.

on 27th June, 1793, where the question 'What is the duty of Christians with respect to the spread of the Gospel?' was discussed, the following conclusions were decided upon:

- (1) It is the duty of Christians to spread the Gospel.
- (2) They resolved to unite for this endeavour their respective connexions.
- (3) A fund was to be started.
- (4) United prayer meetings were to begin at 7 o'clock, once a month.

In January, of 1795, eight men, representing the Congregational churches, the evangelical wing of the Church of England, the Presbyterian Church, and the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, came together to discuss the formation of a missionary society. The Warwickshire Association was dissatisfied with the tardy progress in practical organisation, and in April appointed three of their number to attend the first meeting of the Society as soon as it should be convened. This took place on September 22, 1795, in the Spa Fields Chapel, in the presence of a great company. It is interesting to notice that the preliminary discussions, prayers and Bible Study, and the subsequent committee meetings took place/

place in the Castle and Falcon Inn in Aldersgate Street. Thus it is that the Methodist revival, and the London Missionary Society both began in the same London Street.

Dr. Haweis of the Church of England preached the first sermon to the newly constituted society, and he was also foremost in seeking to strengthen its inter-denominational nature. It was on this basis that a similar society was constituted six months later in March, 1796, in Edinburgh, supported by ministers of the Evangelical party of the Church of Scotland - Dr. Andrew Hunter of the Tron, Dr. David Johnston of North Leith, Dr. John Colquhoun of St. John's, Rev. T.S. Jones of Lady Glenorchy's, Rev. D. Dickson of Canongate Chapel of Ease, Rev. David Black of Lady Yester's and Rev. Walter Buchanan of the Canongate. The Secession was represented by several of their ministers, including Dr. Peddie. Presiding at the first meeting was Dr. Erskine of Greyfriars, who, although 74 years of age, was still in the forefront of the city's life. In doing so Erskine was bearing out his reputation for supporting great causes, unpopular only because their hour was not yet come. (1)

Greville/

(1) He opposed the war with the American colonies, and was the first Scotsman to raise his voice in protest when he published his famous pamphlet "Shall I go to War with My American Brethren?". He was among the first to take an active interest in the abolition of slavery. For years he was in close touch with Jonathan Edwards, and encouraged him in his evangelistic work.



Greville Ewing was only in the fourth year of his ministry when he was appointed secretary to this organisation. It meant that his circle of contacts would be considerably enlarged through his correspondence, not only with the parent society in London, but with the auxiliaries that appeared in Scotland wherever the evangelical cause was strong - in Paisley, Greenock, etc. The basis of the Society was prayer and fellowship, and the meetings that were held throughout the city were well-attended and fervent in spirit. But something more was needed to exploit the prevailing mood to the full. Greville Ewing recognised that some form of communication, some link of common interest, was vital if the movement was to grow. In this way the idea of the Missionary Magazine was born.

SECTION II - THE MISSIONARY MAGAZINE

Since religious journalism played such a large part in inspiring, and co-ordinating evangelical and missionary enterprise, it is therefore necessary to examine its development in the last decade of the eighteenth century.

Its origins in England was the "Christian's Gazette,"⁽¹⁾ in circulation in 1713. In 1720 the "Advocate" appeared, with the explanatory sub-title, "or, A Vindication of the Christian Religion, and the Church of England in Particular, Against the Vile and Blasphemous Writers of the Age." It was issued weekly. In Scotland, the first publication of this type was the "Weekly History, or, An Account of the Most Remarkable Passages Relating to the Present Progress of the Gospel", which appeared in Glasgow in 1741. A full list of these early attempts at religious journalism is given in Appendix D. Although there is a variety of theological outlook and controversial purpose, there can also be discerned the influence of religious revival, stimulating/

(1) Edited by the eccentric publisher John Dunton. Seventeen years earlier he was responsible for a rather different paper - "Night Walker; or, Evening Rambles in Search of Lewd Women." !!!!

stimulating the desire for regular information and inspiration. Considered in proportion to their numbers, the contribution of the evangelicals in pioneering Christian periodical literature is a major one.

The 17th and 18th centuries were periods of intense activity in the field of popular periodical journalism. Crane and Kay in their carefully documented study note a total of 2,426 periodicals published between 1620 and 1800. These include newspapers, reviews and magazines to suit every taste, ranging from technical trade journals to anonymous scandal-sheets purveying the scurrilous tittle-tattle of fashionable society. The religious share of this output was both insignificant and ephemeral - until the appearance of the Evangelical Magazine in July, 1793.⁽¹⁾

The prime mover behind this scheme was the Rev. John Eyre, rector of Homerton. This Anglican clergyman, though remaining faithful to the Establishment, was firmly evangelical in his convictions and always sympathetic to the cause of Dissent. His interests went far beyond the bounds of his parish.

"He/

(1) Morison, in his "Fathers and Founders of the London Missionary Society", erroneously puts the date as 1794, p.33.

"He delighted in every scheme of combined action which tended to unite the real children of God. After his thoughts turned upon the idea of a religious periodical which should circulate useful intelligence at the cheapest possible rate, and which should be conducted upon those catholic principles in which the great body of evangelical Christians might be found to unite . . . It was finally agreed that the responsible conductors of the work should be composed of Churchmen and Dissenters."

(Fathers and Founders of the L.M.S.,
Morison, p.33)

Although John Eyre conceived the idea of the Evangelical Magazine, the practical inspiration came from a layman. In a footnote, Morison says,

"It is understood that Mr. Chapman of the Globe newspaper, was the person in whose mind the idea of the magazine originated."

(Fathers and Founders of the L.M.S.,
p.33)

The contribution of the layman has been from the first a valuable one in the Church's journalistic advance. His technical and professional advice is as necessary as the enthusiastic optimism of the clerical amateur.

The scholarly nonconformist, Dr. Edward Williams, was almost certainly the magazine's first editor.

Morison says,

"He/

"He was one of its first editors" (p. 437)

But he says this also of Dr. Bogue (p. viii). The Dic. of Nat. Biog. definitely ascribes the credit to Dr. Williams. This can be accounted for by the indefiniteness of the editor's function at that time.

"The press had little or no knowledge of the functionary now called the 'editor'. The name most frequently employed for the person mainly responsible for the matter of a paper was the 'author' even although he may not have written one word of the contents. Even that term was not uniformly used it was only as the eighteenth century closed that the word 'editor' began to take on its present signification But the usage was by no means assured."

(The Edinburgh Periodical Press, Couper, W.J., 1908. vol. i, p. 113)

It is probable, therefore, that John Eyre, David Bogue and Edward Williams were jointly responsible for the publication of the Evangelical Magazine and acted more or less in the capacity of editors as the nature of their other commitments allowed.

This magazine played a vital part in preparing the way for the London Missionary Society. Not only did its editors favour the formation of such a society, but its pages provided a national platform for the eloquence and enthusiasm of those who saw the missionary cause/

cause as a Christian imperative, and it provided a preliminary basis of association between Churchmen and Dissenters.

Within a year of its first publication the name "Onesimus" appeared underneath an article entitled "A Comparative View of Calvinism and Arminianism." This was the pen-name of Greville Ewing. His early knowledge of, and contribution to, the magazine may not be entirely due to his literary interests alone. His senior colleague, Thomas Jones, was exactly the same age as John Eyre, and both were West Countrymen. Both had attended as young men at Trevecca Academy, and it is by no means unlikely that they were contemporaries, and that they should have kept in touch with one another during the intervening years. There was a further connection in the fact that Dr. Williams had recently received the degree of D.D. from Edinburgh University, and had also undertaken to tutor young men for the ministry sent to him by Lady Glenorchy. (p. 435) Jones and Ewing would therefore be among the first in Edinburgh to know of the projected plan, and to subscribe to the first number of the magazine.

Ewing/

Ewing subsequently acknowledged his authorship of the article in a letter dated 8th December, and expressed his interest and support:

"I admire the plan of the Evangelical Magazine. It is calculated to disseminate religious knowledge; to inspire and to cherish a religious spirit. It is a newspaper, which contains intelligence respecting the state of the Redeemer's kingdom, in different parts of the earth; which unites more closely the Christian world, by promoting their intercourse; which sends us, from time to time, to the Throne of Grace, on behalf of those whose faces we have never seen in the flesh if I can be of service, by sending occasionally an essay, or by giving any information in my power, you may depend upon my best endeavours."

(Mem. Matheson, p.55)

Even at this early stage of his ministry, Ewing recognised the importance of religious journalism, and his eagerness to have some part in it is plain.

The steady success of the Evangelical Magazine,⁽¹⁾ prompted/

(1) "It has from the profits of its extensive sale, contributed between twenty and thirty thousand pounds to the widows of pious ministers - Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Independents and Calvinistic Methodists; and now, in the fifty-first year of its existence, its conductors are, by the Divine blessing, enabled, on a monthly sale of 15,000 copies, to minister the annual sum of fourteen hundred pounds to the object of their beneficent regard."

(Fathers and Founders, p.34)

prompted him to consider the possibility of further development in the field north of the border. The formation of the Edinburgh Missionary Society and the consequent extension of correspondence between members in the different denominations in widely scattered places provided the necessary conditions for publishing a religious periodical in Edinburgh. But he was by no means alone in his hopes. Others were already taking practical steps towards a similar end. Once again it was a man in the printing trade, a Mr. Pillans of Edinburgh, who took the initiative, and originally proposed a plan for a religious magazine to be published by him at reduced rates. Another layman, Mr. John Campbell, was to be the editor. An agreement to this effect had actually been signed before Greville Ewing, accompanied by Dr. Charles Stuart, approached Campbell with the information that they, too, envisaged such a publication. It was thereupon decided that rather than run the risk of competition at such an early stage, John Campbell would retire from his undertaking in order to allow the new publication to go ahead with a clear field under the editorship of Greville Ewing, whom Campbell generously described as:

"the/

"the fittest man in Scotland for the undertaking, not only from his talents, but also from his official position, being secretary to the Edinburgh Missionary Society."

(Mem. Matheson, p.82)

His immediate associate in the venture, Charles Stuart, was an interesting personality. He was older than Ewing, having been born in 1745, son of James Stuart of Dunearn, Lord Provost of Edinburgh, a descendent of James, fourth earl of Moray. He was licensed by Presbyterian ministers in London in 1772, and enrolled as a preacher by the Presbytery of Edinburgh in that year. He was presented to the parish of Cramond in 1773 by Lady Glenorchy. Unhappy about Church Establishment, he resigned in 1776, and formed an Anabaptist congregation in Edinburgh which was ultimately dissolved. He then studied medicine and graduated M.D. in 1781 and practised as a physician. He married the daughter of Dr. John Erskine and subsequently succeeded to the estates of Dunearn. He was the father of the notorious James Stuart, W.S. of Dunearn, voluble and irascible Whig, slayer of Boswell of Auchinleck in a duel at Auchtertool in 1822. In 1798 he founded another religious periodical, the/

the "Edinburgh Quarterly Review Intended to Promote Knowledge, Belief and Influence of Divine Revelation", which ran for two years, during the greater part of which time it was engaged in doctrinal controversy. He had been one of the original founder members of the Speculative Society at Edinburgh University in 1764. Thus Ewing became closely identified with one whose nature combined aristocratic connections, force of intellect, theological and scientific training and experience, evangelical in-laws, and a determined independence of thought and action - a fascinating though formidable personality!

It was an opportune time for such a journalistic experiment. During the latter half of the 18th Century there had been a steady increase in the number of periodical publications in Scotland. The following figures refer to new publications:

In the 1740's there were 3;
 In the 1750's there were 4;
 In the 1760's there were 5;
 In the 1770's there were 13;
 In/

In the 1780's there were 9;
and in the 1790's there were 25. (1)

The editor of a northern magazine depended absolutely on his link with London. The Stat. Ac. records how regular communications between London and Edinburgh improved over the space of twenty years;

"In 1763 one stage coach a month for London! It was twelve to sixteen days on the journey. In 1783, sixty coaches a month, taking four days, some sixty hours! Forty years ago it was common for people to make their will before setting out on a London journey."

Stat. Ac. (vol. v, p.587)

Owing/

(1) Two other papers made their appearance in 1796: the "Scots Chronicle", priced 4d., issued twice a week, "The general design of the Scots Chronicle is to diffuse useful and accurate information among the people of Scotland." It was liberal in its point of view. The other was "The Ghost", issued from Fairyland, price 2d., of four pages, by Felix Phantom "My intention is to publish two numbers weekly, to continue the progress of Knowledge, to attack error, whether in manners, science or any other branch of human knowledge; so that the empire of the evil geni may be further retrenched If notwithstanding all my endeavours for that purpose, they (mankind) do not pay due regard to my publication I must give up the Ghost." Robert Heron published a scurrilous parody of this magazine in July, 1796. A month previously he had been speaking as an elder in the Missionary Debate in the General Assembly, and although himself a Moderate, had moved a conciliatory resolution, sympathetic to the missionary point of view, which had been formally seconded by the Dr. Erskine. Here we have an insight into the strangely contradictory moral character of the eighteenth century Scotsman.

Owing to the improvement in economic conditions there was a growing demand for literature of all kinds, which previously had been beyond the pocket of all but a few of the population:

" but readers of periodicals were far more numerous (in mid-eighteenth century) than purchasers. In spite of the fact that libraries for the perusal of periodical literature were virtually non-existent, the intelligent man of limited income or of thrifty nature was not shut off entirely from the benefits of the press. Journals could be found in the coffee-houses of the larger cities. They could be subscribed for by groups of individuals, who like the members of the Town Council of Montrose were willing to wait not only weeks but even months for an opportunity to read the news. They were procurable from the town's supply in certain of the more enterprising centres, of which Stirling was a notable instance. Even in the country a paper was not infrequently made to serve the needs of many families, passing from household to household until it had covered the length and breadth of practically a whole parish."

(Scottish Periodical Press, Craig, M.E., p. 18)

The fact that Ewing lived in Edinburgh made his task more reasonable, for the capital was

"intellectually, even more than physically in renaissance between 1750 and 1789 in no other intellectual centre in the country were there so many individuals interested in literary activity, or so well equipped to promote it."

(Scottish Periodical Press, Craig, p.23)

Out of a total of nearly two and a half thousand periodicals published between 1620-1800 only 153 originated in/
in/

in Scotland. Of that number, 103 were published in Edinburgh, while only 22 appeared in Glasgow, 8 in Aberdeen, 8 in Dundee, and the remaining 10 scattered throughout the rest of the country - in Perth, Kelso, Dumfries, etc. Ewing was at the hub of things, in a city teeming with talent, and with abundant means for the production and distribution of a new monthly.

He also had the advantage of being able to model his production on the plan of the already successful Evangelical Magazine. An increasing number of the religious public were taking an interest in the missionary outreach of the church, not simply because it was a just cause, but also because it was one of the most thrilling aspects of Christian life and service. They were ready to buy the new and unusual magazine.

Apart from his own lack of experience in the journalistic field there was one difficulty that confronted him in common with all other periodical editors - that of economic stringency. Paper was very expensive - the cost had gone up by 150 per cent in 1794, and the government Stamp Duty was equally severe. Many/

Many periodicals were driven out of circulation. Even the long-established "Scots Magazine" was forced to raise its price to ninepence in 1794.

In spite of the financial difficulties involved, the "Missionary Magazine" made its first appearance in the summer of 1796, and was from the beginning a success.

Symbolic of its world-wide concern the first number had inserted a large map of the globe, bearing the legend, "From the best authorities." The places where missions are actually established or are actively intended to be sent are marked with a curious pointing finger. These are noted as Greenland, Labrador, Canada, Berbice and Paramaraibo in S. America, the Marquesas and Society Islands in the Pacific, Sierra Leone, the Foulah country and Bavian's Kloof in Africa, and Tranquebar and Benares in India. In that age when the bounds of God's Kingdom were being enlarged every year, the study of geography held a special interest for Christian people, and was included in the curriculum of the students of the theological academies.

The frontispiece is an engraving of Captain Wilson, master of the first missionary ship, the "Duff".
The/

The title-page gives full information: "The Missionary Magazine for 1796, A Periodical Monthly Publication, Intended as a Repository of Discussion and Intelligence Respecting the Progress of the Gospel Throughout the World."

The preface, which is surely the work of Greville Ewing, explains the purpose of the paper. Its first claim is, significantly, to independence,

"It is neither the property nor the production of any missionary society . . . but it is itself the private undertaking of individuals . . ."

(Miss. Mag. vol. i, pref. p.i.)

It seeks, however, the support of all those interested. It is being undertaken without any financial interest. It is ecumenical in its outlook and will report the endeavours of different religious groups who are striving to further the Gospel. The sole test of its support is

"that it will gladly acknowledge all who translate the Holy Scriptures into the native languages of those among whom they preach."

(Ibid. p.ii)

A note of diffidence is understandably apparent:

"Friends may soon be disappointed as to the prudence or the ability of the editors of the new production, but they shall assuredly experience strict impartiality, and sincere respect."

(Ibid. p.iii)

Finally/

Finally, Ewing gives an indication of his attitude towards new discoveries and insights into truth -

"The truth is, indeed, simple, connected and uniform; but our discoveries with regard to it, always require enlargement, and additional clearness."

(Ibid. p.iii)

The first number reveals the enthusiasm and the breadth of outlook of its sponsors. Included in its contents are:

"A letter from a Person who was Once an Actor, but who now Desires to go Abroad as a Missionary. It was Sent to a Gentleman in Edinburgh, and Gives an Interesting Account of the Manner in which the Writer was Brought to Know the Grace of God in Truth."

There is a proposal for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. The plan was to purchase a number of young slaves, with a view to setting them free and preparing some of them for missionary work among their own people. There is a description of the sufferings of some Moravian settlements in the Low Countries as a result of the war which was then raging in Europe, and a review of the Moravian missions throughout the world. Extracts are printed from letters written by the Rev. Mr. Clark, and Messrs. Smith, MacMillan and Wilson, who, a few months previously, had gone from Edinburgh as missionaries to Sierra Leone.

Book/

Book reviews form a considerable part of the contents, and include accounts of such titles as: "Prayer for Revival of Religion In All The Protestant Churches," by Alexander Pringle of Perth; "Remarks On Important Theological Controversies," by the late Rev. Mr. Jonathan Edwards; "Genuine Religion the Best Friend of the People." The magazine concludes with local news of the proceedings of the Missionary Societies in Scotland - in Stirling, Kelso, Paisley, Greenock, Perth and Dundee, revealing how rapidly the dynamic impulse of the parent London Society had spread. A note of its first Annual Meeting is also included.

Succeeding numbers of the Missionary Magazine reveal that Ewing was confronted in his own time by those questions which are still live issues today. It was his purpose to bring them before the reading public, and to create an atmosphere of opinion that would enable Christianity in Scotland and throughout the world to be strengthened. He focussed attention upon the opportunities for the spread of the Gospel in foreign lands, but he did not fall into the mistake of the fools whose "eyes are upon the ends of the earth". He made constant references to the necessary contribution of the local/

local auxiliaries. Nor did he neglect to bring forward the work of the Home Missionary Societies, emphasising through reports of their steady expansion, their importance in the total evangelistic strategy of the Church. He publicised the formation of prayer groups in the home, in the local church, and among Christians of different denominations. He brought a new conception to ordinary men and women within the churches of their opportunity as lay folk in the service of God. He urged the religious instruction of the young, and discussed the reality of childhood experience of the grace of Christ. The theme of conversion was a recurring one, and striking examples of changed lives in all classes of society regularly appeared in the magazine. He strove to make unity among the denominations a primary objective of the magazine's policy. To this end he referred his readers repeatedly to the authority of the Scriptures as the common bond of Christians.

The contribution of Greville Ewing, therefore, to the success of the new publication was a manifold one. He brought to his task a devotion to the missionary cause; an able organisational sense which ensured effectiveness on/

on the production side;⁽¹⁾ and a clarity of style that characterised his own contributions.

In six months it became clear that the Missionary Magazine had succeeded beyond the expectations of its originators. In the preface to the second volume, covering the year 1797, the editor comments on this expansion. He asserts that it is not an isolated phenomenon, but an indication of the increasing interest in religious publications:-

" with much pleasure they have learned that never was there a greater number of religious periodical publications carried on than at present, and never were any of them more generally read. The aggregate impression of those alone which are printed in Britain, every month, considerably exceeds thirty thousand."

(Miss. Mag. vol. ii, Pref. p.iii)

The evangelical awakening in the churches is illustrated in the section entitled "Religious Intelligence." Not a month passed but some new ground was broken. Missionary societies multiplied; their prayers began to take practical shape in expeditions to/

(1) An unspecified attempt at religious journalism had been made some twenty years before, but the project had expired quietly after the third number, smothered, Campbell says, under the weight of its own dullness, and exhausted by the inefficiency of its producers.

(Am. Matheson, p.81)

to the South Seas and Sierra Leone; there appeared a new incentive to itinerant evangelism at home -

"Some congregations are beginning to send out six or eight of their best qualified members to converse with the poor in their neighbourhood, etc., with a view of teaching them the value of their souls Let us in Scotland speedily follow the example."

(Ibid. p.45)

There was news of work among Jews in London; work in Newgate Prison among the children of debtors; work in Greenland among the Eskimoes. It is little to be wondered at that the circulation continued to increase from month to month. The magazine was unusual as Christian literature - it was exciting. It brought the faraway places of the earth very near to many a study and fireside - the teeming bazaars of the East, the gloomy forests and rolling prairies of the west, the frozen tundras of the north and the loneliness of the trackless southern seas. Many were led to go out as missionaries to the heathen hosts in the remote places of the earth. The editor himself was ready when the call came to lay down his pen and go forth on the great adventure.

A/

A permanent result of these years as editor was the effect his journalism had upon his subsequent writing and preaching. Gifted as he was with a talent for clarity of expression and exposition, the discipline of producing an interesting periodical equipped him for the days that lay ahead when he had to depend solely upon his popular preaching to maintain himself, and upon his pamphlets for vindication.

SECTION III - MISSION TO BENGAL

Robert Haldane's religious development owed much to the influence of simple working-class piety.

"He used also to say that if he were to point out the individual from whom he derived most spiritual light at the beginning of his career, he would mention a journey-man mason, of the name of Clam, or Klam, of Menstrie. This good man was employed on some of the works at Airthrie With him Mr. Haldane once walked several miles through the woods to a distant part of the estate and on the way the conversation turned from the subject of masonry, to the glory of the great Architect of the universe and (he) ever afterwards looked back with thankfulness to that memorable walk"

(Memoir of Haldanes, p.93)

In the light of subsequent events it would not be too much to say that although Robert Haldane attempted great things through the dynamic inspiration of a literalist theology that rejoiced in the promises of the Spirit and revolted against the powers of the intellect, he nevertheless failed to escape from its stultifying narrowness. Was this perhaps the result of a secret sense of inferiority he experienced in the company of university graduates, scholars, men skilled in philosophy and the original tongues?

However, in the year 1795 there was no sign of such/

such shadows. If it was a stone mason who enlightened his faith, it was an obscure English cobbler who fanned it into flame.⁽¹⁾ Towards the end of 1794 there issued from the press of J.W. Morris at Clipstone the first of the "Periodical Accounts Relative To the Society Formed Among The Particular Baptists For Propagating The Gospel Among The Heathen." Andrew Fuller was responsible for this publication, which contained an account of the course of events leading to the founding of the society, and the letters of William Carey dispatched from India up to 15th February, 1794.

It was this pamphlet that the Rev. William Innes put into the hands of the wealthy laird of Airthrey, and Robert Haldane was instantly captivated by the adventurous dedication of the God-filled Northamptonshire cobbler.

India seemed very far away from the ornamental gardens and shaded walks of Airthrey, but the insistent pleading of its unevangelised millions was loud in his ears. A great resolve began to take shape in his soul, which for scope and generosity was unsurpassed in the record of the Church of Scotland. William Carey had faith/

(1) See Appendix E

faith and determination, certainly, but his little scheme languished for lack of money. What could be achieved if wise and liberal Christian investment backed up the enthusiasm of dedicated Christian lives in missionary enterprise? If there was to be a return to the glorious primitive Christianity of Pentecostal days, when every man heard the apostles speak in their own tongues the wonderful works of God, men needed to imitate the primitive Christians, like "Josus, a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, who, having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet." Robert Haldane saw himself leading the way and winning for himself a new name of Barnabas - the son of encouragement - and the price of Airthrey⁽¹⁾ would be dedicated to the Lord. The only qualification this latter-day Barnabas made, however, was a significant and unscriptural one. He/

(1) "AIRTHREY, an estate with a mansion with mineral wells in Logie parish, Stirlingshire. The estate adjoins Clackmannan- and Perthshires, and was sold about 1796 to Gen. Sir Robert Abercromby, brother of Sir Ralph, hero of Aboukir Bay, and remained in the family of Baron Abercromby till 1890, when it was acquired by Donald Graham, Esq. The mansion stands 1½ miles ESE of Bridge of Allan, was built in 1791 from a design by the architect Adam, is a castellated structure of moderate size, and has a park of remarkable beauty."

(Ordnance Gazetteer of Scotland)

He tended to take to himself the office of Chief apostle.

This decision to sell his estate to finance the venture was primarily the result of the inspiration of Carey's achievement. It came as a culmination of a life-long succession of evangelical influences - his mother in his boyhood, the rugged Scots minister at Gosport during his sea-going years, the stone-mason from Menstrie, the fraternal circle at Stirling Castle. But other factors can be discerned. There may have been a latent urge to distinguish himself, understandable in a descendent of one of the most ancient and illustrious families in Scotland. His uncle, Admiral Duncan, was a popular hero; his cousin Dundas was one of the most influential men in the Pitt administration. They were reckoned great in the eyes of men. Haldane's greatness was going to be found in the service of God.

"It struck me that I was spending my time in the country to little profit, while, from the command of property, which, through the goodness of God, I possessed, I might be somewhere extensively useful."

(Address to the Public, etc., Haldane, p.14)

It is also true that Robert Haldane, especially at this time, favoured a more equitable distribution of wealth/

wealth, and felt that such a disinterested scheme as he proposed would enable him to use his fortune for the general good of mankind.

" . . . a scene of melioration and improvement in the affairs of mankind, seemed to open itself to my mind, which, I trusted, would speedily take place in the world; such as the universal abolition of slavery, of war, and of many other miseries that mankind were exposed to, and which appeared to me wholly to result from the false principles on which the ancient governments had been constructed. I exulted in this prospect from motives of benevolence, and, as far as I know, without any allowed mixture of selfishness. I rejoiced in the experiment that was making in France"

(Address, Haldane, p.4)

Having made his decision Robert Haldane speedily set about the practical details of the plan. First of all he needed a team of colleagues. Carey had seen the necessity for this, but had been utterly without the resources to provide for it.⁽¹⁾ There would be no such hindrance in Haldane's expedition. John Ritchie, an Edinburgh printer, was engaged to go, as well as necessary teachers and evangelists. Young William Innes, so/

(1) While on a preaching tour in Hull before he embarked for India, Carey said to the printer and newspaper editor, William Ward, - "If the Lord bless us, we shall want a person of your business to enable us to print the Scriptures; I hope you will come after us." (Life, p.51.) Ward did so, but not till five years later, when Carey had finally established himself.

so intimately involved in the development of the scheme was eager to take part. On May 22nd, 1796, while in London attending the first Annual Meeting of the L.M.S., Haldane unfolded his scheme to David Bogue, who, although he was at that time forty-six years of age, agreed that night to join the party. Greville Ewing, was also invited to participate, and there is some evidence that his was a last-minute, impulsive invitation, as Haldane saw his plan emerge as an ever more complex reality.

"One evening, as I was sitting alone in my house in Rose Court, Edinburgh, I was surprised by a visit from him and Mr. Innes. On inquiring when they had come to town, they informed me that they had just arrived, and that the sole object of their journey was to see me. Amidst the astonishment excited by this declaration, Mr. Innes, who had been requested to make the proposal, proceeded to state, that Mr. Haldane had conceived a plan of establishing a mission in India; that he wished for the co-operation of a few friends in the undertaking; that Mr. Bogue of Gosport and himself had already consented; that they had agreed to propose the scheme to me also; that my consent would make up a sufficient number of primary associates; and that if I thought it proper to give it, Mr. Haldane would sell the estate of Airthrey, and devote the price of it to defray the expense of the mission, as well as his own life, to assist in its operation. The scheme was noble. To a mind warmed as mine was, by missionary zeal, it would have seemed sacrilege to have stood for a moment in the way of its execution. I consented immediately; immediately was my consent accepted; and thus originated my first connection with Mr. Haldane."

(Facts and Documents, Ewing, p.6)

It/

It is significant that although sustained pressure could not move Greville Ewing the little distance from Edinburgh to a parish in Perthshire, an afternoon's conversation in his parlour could commit him to all the dangers and uncertainties of emigration to India; though not to the financial insecurity that had stared Carey in the face. Besides underwriting the entire expense of the expedition, Haldane proposed to set aside £3,500^{EACH} to insure the livelihood of the three ministerial members of the team, which sum, invested even at a modest $4\frac{1}{2}\%$, would provide a comfortable income.

Ewing's ready acceptance of such a proposal can be easily understood. He was committed to the cause of missions, and was active in their support through his secretaryship of the E.M.S. and his editorship of the Missionary Magazine. His relationship by marriage to John Innes inevitably drew him into the circle around Robert Haldane. It is doubtful whether without this family link Greville Ewing would have been as closely associated with the project as he was. The young minister must have been at that time much impressed, not/

not only by the suddenness of the proposal as it came to him that summer afternoon, but also by the spectacular nature of the whole adventure, and the equally spectacular Christian benevolence of the man who proposed it. Ewing himself had known rapid success in the first years of his ministry, and had come quickly to the front. The thought of an association with a man of such standing in society, and of such extensive wealth and property must have been attractive. His upbringing, though respectable, had been by no means aristocratic, and it is understandable that when overtures were made to him by a man of Robert Haldane's position, he should be somewhat flattered. He was but recently a widower, and no longer likely to be bound by the ties of home or family. He perhaps discerned God's providential hand preparing him for the loneliness and peril of such a far-flung expedition. There was a final factor that appealed to his canny Scottish temperament. The scheme, as we have seen, was financially sound. The Haldane fortune was a sufficient guarantee.

This approach of Haldane to Ewing must have occurred during a flying visit from England sometime in the summer of 1796. During the greater part of that year/

year Haldane was in England, engaged in organising the practical details of the scheme, lobbying for support for it among Members of Parliament, making the most of his connections with Dundas, and preparing his application to the East India Company for a licence to enter Bengal. Ewing remained in Edinburgh for some time after he agreed to be a partner in the enterprise, but he was not idle. The flourishing Missionary Magazine demanded a great deal of time. There was much talk about Haldane's mission, news of it coming, as it did, on the heels of the foreign mission debate in the General Assembly in June, when the overtures from the Synods of Moray and Fife were debated and defeated. The weight of opinion was against him. Even one of his oldest and most sincere friends said that

"He seemed to be in a delirium - he was missionary mad."

(Mem. Matheson, p.95)

In London, another of his friends, John Newton, was not wholly enamoured of the scheme, and in a letter to Ewing in answer to a request for a contribution to the magazine, no doubt gave him the same kind of advice as he/

he gave to John Campbell when he learned that Haldane had been pressing him to join the team to Bengal.

"Mr. H----'s design is a noble one; may the Lord prosper it! . . . but I hope that you will not take such a thought into your own head, as some of your friends have entertained in theirs' for you. If it should enter your pericranium, I hope you will have many friends to give you lectures on moderation, prudence, etc. and that the Lord will give you the hearing ear, and make you content and willing to stay at home. I have no doubt but that Satan would be glad to see you shipped off to India, or anywhere, so he might get rid of you, for you stand in his way where you are."

(Letters of Newton, no. xxxiii, p.98)

Even his church found difficulty in seeing sense in his decision. They were, of course, in general sympathy with the need for missions, but questioned the necessity of their own assistant minister disappearing into the back of beyond. The matter was discussed at a session meeting and the findings forwarded in a letter to Greville Ewing.

"They (the Trustees and Session of Lady Glenorchy's) are not united in the opinion that it is your duty even in order to carry the Gospel to the heathen, to give up a place for which you seem to be trained and planted, by the peculiar hand of Providence; a place where you have, and where they have reason to believe you may yet be long useful. They trust therefore, you will reconsider this matter, and that you will let these circumstances have their due and just weight in your/

your mind; and that you will not proceed to resign your pastoral office, without the most deliberate and full conviction that you are called to it of God."

(Mem., Matheson, p.94)

They were generous enough, however, to remind him that should the present plans fail to mature, he would be thoroughly welcome to return among them once again. But these friendly remonstrances were insufficient to move him from his determination.

Early in November the long-awaited summons came, calling him to London. The band of would-be missionaries had to face their most difficult hurdle, that of obtaining the sanction of the East India Company for their scheme. They had high hopes of a successful outcome as a result of Robert Haldane's persistent submissions to highly placed cabinet ministers. All that was needed now was a last concerted effort. Greville Ewing acted as an escort to Mrs. Haldane and her only child to the capital, where he became busily involved in the final stages of the application.

In the National Library there is a ms. letter of this time, addressed to the Rev. Thomas Haweis at Spa Fields, written by Ewing, soliciting the support of the L.M.S. It is dated 22nd December, 1796;

"We/

"We beg therefore that you, sir, will endeavour to meet your brethren as soon as possible upon this business, and lay this letter before them. When we consider that the question is not, whether a few individuals shall be allowed to go to India to propagate the religion of this country, but whether twenty-four merchants are to exclude the Gospel of Jesus Christ from ten millions of our fellow subjects, we are persuaded you and your brethren will feel the most lively concern in this business, and that nothing further need be said to stimulate your zeal. It is a common cause, a cause of God, of the Redeemer, and of the souls of men. You will see the necessity of losing no time lest our application should be rejected, before your letter is sent"

This is typical of the many letters that went out to those who might be judged sympathetic to the missionary cause. Urgency and enthusiasm are the keynote. Unfortunately for Robert Haldane and his partners all the testimonials and recommendations they had so energetically sought were in vain. The East India Company had a decided aversion to religious interference in their territories. Their decision was communicated on 12th January, 1797. It was very much to the point:

"I have received the Court's command to acquaint you that however convinced they may be of the sincerity of your motives and the zeal with which you appear to be actuated, in sacrificing your personal convenience to the religious and moral purposes described in your letter; yet the Court have weighty and substantial reasons which induce them to decline a compliance with your request . . . 1. William Ramsay, Secretary."

(Hist. of Cong. Waddington, vol. 4, p.81)

Much has been made of the suggestion that Robert Haldane's earlier democratic opinions were largely responsible for this prompt refusal. Such a suspicion may have been eagerly seized upon as a legitimate ground of objection, and added conviction to the determination of the Directors, but it was in fact immaterial. They had already prejudged the issue. They were utterly opposed to any kind of systematic evangelisation of the peoples of India. Even such a favourably placed politician as William Wilberforce had sorrowfully learned that this was so only three years previously..

This refusal came as a keen disappointment to Haldane and his colleagues, but such was their faith in the ultimate success of their scheme that they resolved instantly to make a second application, backed up by even more extensive recommendations. They based their hopes on the fact that new Directors were due to be elected to the Court, and they hoped for more favourable consideration from them.

In the meantime Greville Ewing returned home to his pastoral duties, and continued to advocate the advantages of the Bengal mission in the Missionary Magazine.

In/

In the January, 1797, number, coinciding with the first application to the East India Company, there appeared two articles relevant to the enterprise. One was general and geographic entitled, "The Peculiar Advantages of Bengal As A Field For Missions From Great Britain." The other was a powerful and personal declaration from the pen of David Bogue "On the Warrant Of A Minister Of The Gospel To Become A Missionary."

The April number, spurred by the new urgency demanded by the set-back in January, is even more detailed and specific. It carries a full account of the negotiations to date, and calls for a campaign of prayer.

Appended to this appeal is a further account of the plan of the mission, without which the intercession of its well-wishers would not be fully informed. There is another and less happy reason why such explicit information is necessary -

" . . . several sincere friends of religion seem to entertain prejudices against it, from not being sufficiently informed on the subject. We shall therefore endeavour briefly to state the plan we have formed, and to answer the objections which we have heard against it."

(Miss. Mag.)

And so to the public at large there is revealed a scheme/

scheme remarkable for its comprehensive grasp of missionary strategy, its organisational efficiency, its co-operative enthusiasm and its practical security based on massive financial investment. Its impact in those days, in the dawn of the modern missionary era, was sensational. Nothing like it had ever been heard of before. To some it seemed as if the doors of the Kingdom were being swung wide open to the multitudes of the heathen. But to many others it had more ominous undertones. The scheme was confidently unfolded thus:

"Four of us have associated ourselves together, resolving in dependence upon God, to proceed to Bengal with our families, and to employ our substance, time, and talents, to make the Gospel known to the natives: others have since joined us, and we only wait for leave from the Directors of the India Company. Our intention when there, (after learning the language), is to preach the Word to the natives: to translate the Scriptures, and circulate them extensively: to erect schools in the populous cities, for the education of their youth: and we mean to take out with us some catechists, to assist us in this work. We have sufficient funds to enable us to execute this design."

(Ibid.)

Having sketched the broad outlines of the actual project as it had been originally conceived, the partners go on to deal with the objections and criticisms that had been/

been levelled as a result of the rumour that had been aroused. They can be grouped under four general heads.

- (1) "What is the call these men have, to leave their present situations of usefulness to go to India? Are they discontented at home?" This objection had already been dealt with in the January number of the Magazine. From the first, the would-be missionaries were anxious to make it plain that only disinterested zeal drove them overseas. They had no grudge against the country they were quitting, but were inspired with pity and hope for the peoples to whom they went. It was not dissatisfaction with their lot that drove them from the homeland, but devotion to the command of Christ. "Is it so desirable to go into voluntary and perpetual exile, from our country and our friends? To exchange the government of Britain for the Government of Bengal? To go to a people of strange colour, customs, and language, far inferior to those whom we leave? To encounter, with our families, the diseases of a tropical climate? And, at our time of life, to go again to school, and submit to the drudgery of learning the different languages, which will be necessary before we can even enter upon our office? Whoever can believe that discontent carries to India, we will venture to say, has never seriously considered the matter for a moment."

- (2) "Why do they insist on going to Bengal when the door seems to be shut against them?"

The answer to this objection is certainly not to be attributed to the obstinacy of the missionaries, but rather to the fact that they feel convinced that Bengal actually offers by far the most convenient and suitable field for the spread of the Gospel at that time.

"We/

"We declare that we have no kind of predilection for India; and if we knew of any other country in the world, with equal advantages, and where we could go with equal probability of success, we would turn to it without hesitation."

- (3) "Why do they not go as the apostles did, and not ask leave of anyone?"

This objection finds its answer in the unique type of authority the East India Company exercises over the territory. To compare the proposed scheme with the endeavours of Carey, the Baptist missionary, was unreasonable. Carey went to civilian employment, and was accompanied by only one colleague. If by some chance they were eventually permitted to remain in India, having entered it without proper authorisation, the restrictions that would be enforced against them would be intolerable, and would defeat the very purpose of the project.

(4) The final objection is the most sinister, because the most personal. "It is asserted that the Directors make personal objections to these men; they are afraid they will interfere with their government abroad." This charge is a slander, and proof of its falsity is available. It is not, however, to be published/

published, because of the repercussions it might have upon certain parties. The E.I. Company itself made no such objection; nor "was it possible that they should." The missionaries had given an undertaking that their only concern would be the propagation of Christian religion among the Hindus. In any case they would be in the power of the E.I. Government, and any deviation from their pledge would be met with speedy discipline. The promise given to the Directors of the Company covered every eventuality:

"Should we afterwards conceive it our duty to act otherwise, (which we cannot however for a moment imagine will be the case, although this difficulty also has been started) it is our determination, voluntarily to leave the country, and not to continue in a situation where we must either neglect our duty, or violate our promise."

(Ibid.)

The strongest mark of the sincerity of their undertaking is the fact that they were willing to commit their whole future, their wives and their children to this venture, and to the care and protection of the E.I. Company.

However, the opposition was not confined to open criticism. Such frank comment is only to be expected, and is on the whole reasonable. But -

"more/

"more is to be dreaded from misrepresentations or dark insinuations. Against such weapons we have no means of defence, but the candour of our Christian brethren."

(Ibid.)

The missionaries may be charged with unseemly haste in their preparations, but they had tried to conduct themselves in as orderly a fashion as the urgency of the need allowed.

Britain had been in active occupation of these territories for years, and nothing, apart from the work of the Baptist missionaries had been attempted for the Gospel's sake. That situation had to be remedied immediately.

But, however openly they had unfolded the details of their scheme to the public, they could not escape the barbed gossip of busy, critical tongues. In spite of their protests the misrepresentation continued to mount and it was countenanced in the most reliable and respected quarters. The mole-hill of Robert Haldane's mildly liberal opinions (which even at that time had been drastically altered as a result of his theological discussions on the subject of human depravity), was/

was rapidly becoming a dark mountain of reckless republicanism,⁽¹⁾ which was casting a lengthening shadow over his ministerial associates. The witch hunt was on. As news of French military successes on the continent came in by every post,⁽²⁾ suspicion and fear combined to sweep away every trace of toleration. Cockburn describes the harsh uneasy climate of the times:-

"It is frightful even to recollect the ferocious bitterness and systematic zeal under the direct sanction of the government. No one ever heard/

(1) See "Democratic Principles Illustrated by Example," by Peter Porcupine, London, 1798, a typical example of anti-Jacobin literature. Let the closing paragraph suffice to indicate the whole:- "There is not - there cannot be, a faction in ENGLAND so cruel - so bloody-minded, as to wish to see these scenes repeated in their own or any other country! - The bare recital must appal the heart of every Briton; and since such have been the consequences of confusion and anarchy in France, we may profit by the awful lesson - Those who shall now attempt to propagate doctrines of such a tendency, can only expose themselves to public execration - while the people at large will be taught how to prize the invaluable blessings they enjoy." p.21)

(2) See "A Warning to Britons Against French Perfidy and Cruelty; or, A Short Account of the Treacherous and Inhuman Conduct of the French Officers and Soldiers Towards the Peasants of Suabia, During the Invasion of Germany in 1796. Selected and Translated from a Well-Authenticated German Publication by Anthony Aulriere Esq. With an Address to the People of Great Britain by the Translator." 1798. This publication is a town by town account of rape and pillage that spares ^{none} of the violent details. It is certainly calculated to inspire the utmost terror.

heard of a check being given, even by a hint, from headquarters with a view to arrest intolerance or to encourage charity. Jacobinism was a term denoting everything alarming and hateful and every political objector was a Jacobin. No innovation whether practical or speculative, consequently no political or economical reformer, and no religious dissenter, from the Irish Papist to our own native Protestant seceder, could escape from the fatal word Such was the public condition of Edinburgh in 1800 and for the preceding ten years. It was a condition of great pain and debasement, a natural consequence of bad times operating on defective political institutions. The frightful thing was the personal bitterness"

(Cockburn's Mem. pp.75-95.)

Typical of these years of hysterical rumour and reaction is a confidential letter to Lord Dundas from the Rev. William Porteous, (the ms. of which is preserved in the N.L.) who seems on this and other occasions to have acted as a Government informer. It throws a flood of light on the tangled web of disaffection and doubt that surrounded the missionaries and gave to their every action a sinister turn. (See Appendix F)

These undercurrents came to the surface in the most public manner in September of that year. The whispered insinuations became an explicit accusation directed at Haldane and his team from an unexpected and/

and responsible source. Professor John Robison⁽¹⁾ who occupied the Chair of Natural Philosophy at Edinburgh University published a lengthy volume entitled "Proofs of a Conspiracy".

In the course of a survey of the subversive elements engaged in plotting the downfall of constitutional government throughout Europe he commented on a dangerous trend at home:

"I grieve that he (Dr. Priestly) has left any of his friends and abettors among us. A very eminent one said in a company a few days ago that 'he would willingly wade to the knees in blood, to overturn the establishment of the Kirk of Scotland.' I understand that he proposes to go to India and there to preach Christianity to the natives. Let me beseech him to recollect, that among us, Christianity is still considered as the Gospel of peace, and that it strongly dissuades us from bathing our feet in blood. I understand that more apostles of the mission are avowed enemies of all religious establishments and indeed of all establishments of any kind."

(Proofs of a Conspiracy, Robison, p.485)

Such/

(1) He had ". . . . a pigtail so long and so thin that it curled far down his back, and a pair of huge blue worsted hose without soles and covering the limbs from the heels to the top of the thigh in which he both walked and lectured seemed rather to improve his wise elephantine head and majestic person. A little hypochondria induced by the frequent use of laudanum for the alleviation of pain"

(Cockburn's Mem. p.51)

Such a dangerous libel could not be left unanswered. Although no name had been mentioned, the reference was unmistakeable. Robert Haldane at once took issue on the matter with the professor, and demanded a public retraction. Greville Ewing was commissioned with the task of personally delivering the letter in Edinburgh. Since Robison was away from home he forwarded Haldane's letter to Glasgow, together with a covering letter of his own, dealing with the allegation that he, and the others associated with the mission to India, were avowed enemies of the Establishment of the Church of Scotland.

When Professor Robison eventually replied to Ewing - he gave his ill-health as the reason for the delay - his explanation was rambling and vague:

"I had no individual in my thoughts."

("Address", Haldane, p.48)

He could not recollect whether he had heard with any certainty the names of the persons involved, nor could he recollect even to have heard Mr. Innes' name mentioned. He had been under the impression that Ewing was a Mr. Greville, and he had heard rumours when he had been in London, and in conversation - significantly enough - with/

with those with an interest in the East India trade. Apparently the talk that was circulating had it that the intended missionaries to India made no secret of their dislike of national faiths, national worship and national churches.

"It was so often repeated to me by persons of judgement and wealth, and also communicated with so much seriousness that I was fully convinced of its truth. And with respect to the general and **strong** disapprobation of all religious establishments, I never heard it contradicted, and the more I enquire, the more I hear of it to this hour."

(Address, Haldane, p.50)

Ewing's reply to this catalogue of lame excuses from a man who ought to have known better than to retail prejudiced hearsay under the guise of scholarly analysis, is an excellent example of his controversial style he was developing as a result of his editorial responsibilities. It also indicates his awareness of the tensions within the Church, and the need for plain speaking and hard hitting in defence of the truth. The disappointing result of the missionary debate in the General Assembly in 1796 had made it plain that the time for smooth words was past. This encounter with Professor Robison was the first round of a polemical struggle that was to last for fifteen years.

He/

He rebuked Robison for publishing so serious an accusation on information which, in Robison's own words, was desultory and incomplete. Such a charge, made on the basis of mere rumour, was out of place in a book which carried such a judicial title as "Proofs of a Conspiracy . . ." Even so, Robison's error was not simply that of suggesting that the supporters of the mission held opinions hostile to the establishment of the church. The accusation was far more grievous and deadly -

"Is it not obvious that the tendency of the whole passage is to represent us as a branch of the grand conspiracy, or at least as a set of designing and blood-thirsty villains, who have combined, and are actually endeavouring, by deceit, or by violence, or by both, to carry into effect some clandestine project by which we shall force our opinions upon mankind?"

(Ibid. p.55)

It was obvious that Professor Robison was unaware of the fact that Greville Ewing was himself a minister of the Established Church. But Robison's charge was even more severe. Not only did he allege that the "apostles of this mission are avowed enemies of all religious establishments," but he went on to say,

"and indeed, of all establishments of any kind."

This/

This is, of course, tantamount to a charge of treason. Ewing did not question the sincerity of Robison's motives in the matter, but he had grave doubts as to his wisdom. He concluded in crushing fashion;

"I say you have been misinformed, you have been credulous, you have been rash, perhaps you have been abused by persons who delight in devising or in giving currency to malicious reports you should wipe off the foul aspersion you have cast upon us. I think this should be done in a very public and explicit manner."

(Ibid., p.59)

Later, Ewing had the satisfaction of seeing the insinuations deleted from further editions of the book, and in the pages of the press, but the damage had been done. The mission which had been conceived with such high hopes in the spring and summer of 1796, was finally abandoned three years later. Its noble intentions had been impugned, and its partners branded as trouble-makers and worse. Step by step Ewing and Innes were being driven into isolation within the Church of Scotland - suspect men, and consequently into ever closer association with Robert Haldane, who in spite of his rebuff over the Bengal project, was still convinced that his talent and riches could be used in the service of God, if not abroad, then certainly at home.

The/

The last unhappy echoes of the Bengal mission came twelve years later, and reveal the extent to which the former partners had drifted apart. Gone is the fervent unity of purpose that breathes through the articles in the Magazine of 1797. In the lengthy exchange of pamphlets during the years 1809-11 between Robert Haldane and Greville Ewing the memory of their old association is clouded by suspicion and reproach. Ewing accused Haldane of deliberately surprising him (Ewing) into joining the missionary scheme without giving him sufficient time to consider the proposal maturely - of taking advantage of a young man's impetuosity to foster his own ends.

"Perhaps it would be an injustice to him, if I should positively accuse him of artifice in this matter. I confess, however, that when unpleasant feelings have been occasioned, by unseemly appearances of artifice in other matters, painful suspicions have forced themselves upon me, and I have felt it unaccountable, on any of the ordinary principles of fair-dealing, that the other associates should have had time to deliberate, but that the whole scheme should have been concealed from me, till it was completed"

(Facts and Documents, p.6)

Ewing's final word on the whole matter is sad and cynical. As far as he was concerned the entire scheme was/

was misconceived, and he considered it a mercy that he had extricated himself from it -

"Much reason have I to bless God, that we were not permitted to go to India. What I have suffered from my connections with Mr. Haldane, will, in some measure, appear from what is yet to be stated. How dreadfully would my sufferings have been aggravated, had they come upon me in a distant foreign country!"

(Facts and Documents, p.7)

Haldane's counter-accusations were equally severe.

With reference to the charge that he had deceitfully trapped Ewing into joining the Bengal scheme unadvisedly he says -

"How can I account for such treatment from any man on earth, unless I suppose, that, giving way to the intemperance of his mind, suspicious jealousy has so far disordered his imagination, as entirely to overpower his judgement in relation to whatever concerns me or my conduct."

(Remarks on a Late Publication, etc., p.7)

To this open charge of mental derangement Haldane adds another - that of desertion. He maintains that Ewing withdrew from the project earlier than any of the others, and before the outcome was finally settled. In a veiled question to Ewing he hints that the reasons for that action were unworthy, involving both self interest, and personal animosity to an unnamed member of the group. This/

This kind of insinuation, it must be admitted, appears fairly frequently in Haldane's controversial papers, not only with reference to Ewing, but to William Orme and others -

- (1) "You engaged in a mission to India, and before it was prevented from another quarter, you abandoned the design."

(Letters to Mr. Ewing, by R.H., p.41)

- (2) "But I must request to Mr. Ewing, when he comes forward again to the public on this subject, to state the two reasons he gave at the time as sufficient to induce him to forsake the mission, the one relating to himself, the other to one of those associated with him."

(Answer to Mr. Ewing, by R.H., p.6)

Finally Haldane reciprocates the personal disappointment and distaste that Ewing had so pungently expressed:

"Certain I am of this, had I known Mr. Ewing as well at that time as I have known him since; had I known no more of him than that he was capable of publishing such a statement of that business as he has done, he never should have had an opportunity of accusing me of artifice in this matter."

(Answer to Mr. Ewing, p.7)

A fair consideration of the facts, however, reveal how both men's recollection of the Bengal mission had been distorted by the deterioration of their personal relationship, and by the divergence of their theological outlook/

outlook. Ewing had no ground for complaint in 1796. The thought that he was being press-ganged into Haldane's expedition could scarcely have arisen in the mind of one who saw so clearly that "the King's business required haste." In his letter to Dr. Haweis, dated December, 1796, soliciting his support he uses phrases like ". . . . as soon as possible" "You will see the necessity of losing no time" Besides, Haldane made a similar sudden approach to David Bogue, who also consented immediately. Whatever the subsequent course of events Robert Haldane had no thought of subtle manoeuvres in his relationship with Greville Ewing. His ears were filled with the crying of heathen India, and he needed good men to help him. His own enthusiasm, as well as the magnificent scope of the scheme, were the magnets that instantly drew Greville Ewing into the company. Ewing's complaint can be considered simply as the stricture of cautious middle-age upon the impulsive ardour of youth. Nor does Haldane's counter-charge of desertion against Ewing stand much examination. Had there been at the time any feeling of defection Ewing would have immediately forfeited the confidence of Haldane. But so far was this from the case that the end/

end of the Bengal scheme was the signal for even closer co-operation between the two men in the Tabernacle and Academy scheme. In the latter Haldane chose Ewing as tutor in preference to Bogue. He would hardly have extended this confidence to one whom he thought was disloyal.

Despite these bitter dregs, however, the scheme was not entirely without beneficent results. By its daring it gave the church a vision of the opportunities of foreign mission work. It emphasised the variety of ways in which the Gospel could be actively propagated in a strange land - through the education of the young, through the printing of the Scriptures in the native tongues, through the training of itinerant catechists, through medical work. It awakened a sense of responsibility in Christian Britain for the spiritual welfare of her colonial peoples, and focussed attention on India as a land ready for the Gospel. Within twenty years the prejudice of the East India company was overcome, and a fruitful field for evangelism opened up. Haldane and his friends had hammered apparently in vain upon the door, but the sound of their knocking roused a sleeping church.

"The/

"The old historic Church of Scotland, as a church, became a missionary organisation. Thomas Chalmers and Dr. Inglis chose India as its field, the capital Calcutta as the centre of its operations, and Brahmanism as the special object of its aggressive action. Its first missionary, Alexander Duff, landed in Bengal in time to receive the apostolic succession, in the highest sense, from the venerable Carey From the day that Carey's earliest "Periodical Accounts" reached Edinburgh and the Ochils, Scotland has been true to the duty of the British Empire to the people of India."

(The Conversion of India, Smith, p.129)

CHAPTER THREESECTION I - LEAVING THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND(1) INTERNAL FACTORS

On the first of December, 1798, Greville Ewing resigned from the Church of Scotland. To understand the reasons for this step it is necessary to examine his position within that Church, as well as the external factors that influenced his decision.

The records of the General Assembly during the years in which Ewing grew to manhood illustrate the cross-currents of Scottish religious life in the eighteenth century. On the one hand there was a growing dissatisfaction with the Establishment of the national Church, and a groping towards some satisfactory alternative form,⁽¹⁾ and on the other hand a determined development of General Assemblyism, concentration of ecclesiastical power, and the rigid enforcement of the laws of patronage. The Proceedings of the General Assembly between 1780-90 furnish ample evidence of these tensions. Each year saw more presentees intruded "over/

(1) "I have sometimes thought that were a secession from the Established Church managed with prudence and temper, and with the sole view of promoting Christianity, it might be of considerable use."

(The Evil and Danger of Schism" - Boston, T. second ed., 1753, pref, p. v.)

"over the belly of the congregation", and often with the persuasion of military muskets. The subsequent appeals from Kirk Sessions and Presbyteries to the Assembly (which year after year occupied much of the time) were almost all without exception refused, and the intrusion given the sanction of the highest court. At the same time all attempts to alter the existing laws were consistently dismissed. Throughout the lower courts discontent was widespread, but the forces ranged against the popular point of view in General Assembly were permanent and powerful.

In 1781, an overture from the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr calling for the abolition of the power of Intrusion was dismissed "without a vote as incompetent, and of a dangerous tendency." (Scots Mag. v. 43, p.273). The Synods of Perth and Stirling, and of Fife, tried again, in 1783, to repeal the Act of 1712 restoring patronage. They were defeated. The following year a further overture from Glasgow and Ayr "complaining of the grievances of patronage" was rejected on the motion of Mr. Solicitor Dundas as, "inexpedient, ill-founded and dangerous to the peace and welfare of this/

this Church . . ." (Scots Mag. v. 46, p. 277).

The Synod of Dumfries, in 1785, proposed "to consult the Landed Interest and Royal Burghs, on a repeal or alteration of the laws relating to patronage

The General Assembly saw no necessity for any alteration in the mode of settling ministers!" (Ibid. 47, p.269).

Thus the records of this decade reflect a negative and unfruitful phase in the life of the Church of Scotland. This impression is strengthened by the fact that almost the only other kind of business regularly transacted by the commissioners in Edinburgh, was concerned with dealing with charges of fornication and adultery brought against parish ministers!

But big events came bursting in to disturb these sour parochial pre-occupations. The next ten years brought conflict, but they brought also new horizons, and a dangerous concept that challenged the ancient authority of Establishment - the will of the people. As early as 1788 a motion to petition the House of Commons with regard to the Slave Trade was overtured in the General Assembly. Although it was defeated on this/

this occasion, the conscience of the country was beginning to stir.⁽¹⁾ Throughout the Presbyteries the debate was continued with enthusiasm. Thus the way was preparing for the next logical step. If Christian Britain owed her heathen subjects liberty, did she not owe them even more the covenanted mercies of the Gospel?

Greville Ewing had thus grown up in a Church deeply divided against itself. During his years at University, however quietly spent, the background was one of turbulent political change in France that affected social conditions at home, and faced the church with new problems. His ministry began, as we have seen previously, amid the excitement of the treason trials, the widespread dissemination of radical and free-thinking ideas through the democratic societies, and the growing awareness of the need to evangelise to the ends of the earth. It was an urgent, apprehensive age/

(1) It is significant to discover in the Glasgow Courier of 20th March, 1792, a letter from the heritors of Stirling urging the abolition of the slave trade. The letter was the outcome of a special meeting, and it appears under the signature of the chairman - Robert Haldane. Thus it appears that long before he incurred the displeasure of his fellow-landowners over his mild defence of the French Revolution in July, '94, Haldane was active in progressive philanthropy.)

age. In such a time it is easy to understand why the text from Daniel should occur so often in arguments and illustration:- "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." (12⁴)

Although Ewing never took his seat in the General Assembly - because of the peculiar status of Lady Glenorchy's - matters relative to him personally were dealt with in that Court. On each of these occasions, it must be noted, he was increasingly in conflict with the Moderates.

The first instance, (about which Ewing's daughter is either ignorant or secretive) deals with his student days. In the Minutes of Glasgow Presbytery dated 7th March, 1792, is the following item:

"The moderator also produced a letter from the Presbytery of Hamilton dated 31st January, intimating that they intended to take on probationary trials Mr. Greville Ewing, Student."

From this it appears that, possibly owing to the good offices of John Lockhart of Cambusnethan by whom he was employed as a tutor, Ewing was being permitted by the Presbytery of Hamilton to undergo his trials before he had completed his full course of theological studies begun in/

in 1787. Although at an earlier period there had been considerable flexibility with regard to licensing and ordination, the latter part of the century had seen an increasing stringency in the regulations. The growth of non-conformity in England had been partly responsible, and the controversy over Lady Glenorchy's English chaplains had prompted the Act of 1779 which made invalid any ordination obtained outside Scotland. ("An Abridgement etc., Gillan, p.184). The Assembly asserted its right to stipulate the conditions required for the ministry, and urged the Presbyteries to enforce them. A further problem arose as the output of divinity students from the universities multiplied beyond the number necessary to fill the pulpits of charges falling vacant. To control this ministerial over-production the Assembly of 1786 "recommended to Presbyteries, to be cautious in granting ordination to such persons as have neither a fixed charge, nor a reasonable prospect of such provision" (Ibid., etc. p.184).

Although Ewing was premature in his application for licensing, both by reason of his unfinished course of/

by
 of study and his lack of prospects of a settlement,
 then Hamilton Presbytery was apparently disposed to
 overlook this irregularity, possibly on the basis of
 influential recommendation. The Synod of Glasgow in
 due course endorsed the decision, but not without dissent.
 That formidable Moderate of the Moderates, Dr. William
 Porteous⁽¹⁾ objected, and appealed to the General
 Assembly. The strength of this opposition, or the
 hopelessness of expecting a favourable sentence from a
 Moderate-dominated supreme Court, prevailed upon Ewing
 to withdraw his petition. Consequently there appears
 in the Minutes for 1792 this brief item:

"The Assembly had next presented a petition from
 Dr. William Porteous against a sentence
 of the Synod of Glasgow, relative to taking Mr.
 Ewing on trials. Dr. Porteous appeared at the
 bar and intimated that the said complaint was
 fallen from."

(Glas. Presb. Min., 1792, p. 11.)

In the light of subsequent events it is
 significant/

(1) (" took a leading part for many years in the
 proceedings of the Glasgow Presbytery, and of the Church
 in the west generally. Strongly orthodox in his views,
 he resisted the smallest innovation. He defended his
 position with his pen, and did not spare his adversaries.
 He resolutely opposed the introduction of organs in
 1807 Fasti Eccl.)

significant that Greville Ewing clashed with Authority at the very outset of his ministry in the Church of Scotland. On this occasion he yielded, and accepted the disciplines of delay. But the unusual fact remains that his name had already been heard in the highest court of Scottish Presbyterianism.

The second occasion on which Ewing figures 'in absentia' in the proceedings of the General Assembly occurred four years later, and in a much more dramatic way. By that time he was the popular second minister of a busy charge in the Capital. His reputation as a preacher was growing, and his interest in evangelistic work, at home, in connection with the Sabbath Schools, and abroad, in the Missi nary Societies, was well known.

In his capacity as secretary of the E.M.S. one of his first duties was to send out a circular letter to ministers describing the objects of the new Society and enlisting their help. From some quarters the response was immediate and favourable. Two Synods overtured the Assembly in support. Fife asked for general approval to be given by the whole church to the principle of missionary expansion; Moray and Nairn went/

went further and urged the practical measure of a general collection throughout the parishes. The consequent debate on the 27th of May, 1796, marks one of the historic moments in the religious life of Scotland. Dr. Hugh Miller rightly regarded it as exposing the fundamental dichotomy within the Established Church.⁽¹⁾ His description of the implications of the encounter is accurate:

"The characters in the debate on missions stand out in bold relief. There is a dramatic force and picturesqueness about them. Evangelism had to contend with the current of the age - it was alike denounced by the worlds of literature and fashion. The politically powerful exerted themselves to crush it as mischievous - the gay and dissipated denounced it as morose and intolerant - the widely spread scepticism of the period characterised it as irrational and absurd - historians have written whole volumes to traduce and vilify it - and genius has striven to render it ridiculous in song."

(The Two Parties, etc. p. 22)

The/

(1) Amid the deepening divergences of 1841 that led ultimately to the Disruption two years later, he published an account of the debate as a commentary on the continuing crisis under the title - "The Two Parties in the Church of Scotland Exhibited as Missionary and Anti-Missionary; Their Contendings in These Opposite Characters in the Past, and their Statistics Now." He was able to draw on a rare contemporary source - an account of the debate by an anonymous eye-witness published together with the Regulations and preliminary circular of the E.M.S. (An Account of the Proceedings etc. 1796)

The speeches and tactics of these opposing the overtures reveal the extent of their antagonism as much as their ignorance of the Gospel.

It must be recorded, however, that it was a Moderate layman, Robert Heron, who moved in a spirit of fairness that a committee be formed to consider and report. Dr. Erskine formally seconded. His great "Rax Me that Bible" speech was to come at a later point. But before the subject of missions reached the stage of debate the opposition scored a procedural victory. They succeeded in having the two overtures debated and decided together, the general with the particular, so that defeat for the financial proposal meant automatic defeat for the missionary principle.

Rev. William Hamilton of Gladsmuir advanced a specious argument against missions to the heathen - they reverse the order of nature, in which savage men ought to be civilised before receiving the enlightenment of the Gospel; they spoil the happy natural state of the heathen; they encourage the dangers of antinomianism; and they divert aid from the need at home. Included in this speech was the insinuation that the missionary-minded/

minded ministers were guilty of misappropriating from the Poor Fund, all the more grievous an allegation since there had been a succession of poor harvests. (1)

"I am truly sorry to say that some of our brethren, without consulting any ecclesiastical court, had not only joined missionary societies, but had also set apart to their use the money collected for the poor. For such improper conduct censure is, by much, too small a mark of disapprobation; it would, I doubt, not be a legal subject of penal prosecution."

(Acc. of Proc. and Debates Anent Missions, of Gen., Ass. p. 26)

Dr. Erskine rose to refute the charge, and obtained a lame retraction from Hamilton, but the smear had done its damage. The attack, however, was only beginning. It was taken up by Dr. 'Jupiter' Carlyle who fastened on to the fact that Dr. Erskine had mentioned the record of Roman Catholics in missionary enterprise. When reason fails and charity withers, it is a well-established fact of ecclesiastical argument that the big no-Popery stick is always handy:

"Moderator/

(1) ~~I.E. a poor harvest~~ - "In the year 1795 and 1796 there was a greater dearth than has ever since visited the British Islands. On 4th March, 1795, 11,000 persons, being probably $\frac{1}{8}$ of the population, were fed by charity in Edinburgh".

(Cockburn's Mem., p.65)

"Moderator, my reverend brother has been proposing as a model for our imitation the zeal for propagating the Christian religion displayed by Roman Catholics!. . . ."

(Ibid. p.37)

David Boyle, an elder from Irvine, levelled a more serious charge. He saw the proposed missions as a seed-bed of sedition in the days to come. There is even a note of hysteria in Boyle's attack:

". . . . Observe, Sir, (quoting from the E.M.S. circular) they are affiliated, they have a common object, they correspond with each other, they look for assistance from foreign countries, in the very language of many of the seditious societies. Above all, it is to be marked, they have a common fund It now therefore becomes us as much as possible to discourage numerous societies, for whatever purposes"

(Ibid., p.55)

Principal Hill of Saint Andrews, leader of the Moderate party in the Assembly at that time, chose to treat the whole matter as trivial and tending towards increased sectarianism. He dealt contemptuously with the Society's circular, dismissing it as irregular, unimportant and impertinent:

"The proceedings of the members and promoters of the Missionary Societies came little within the sphere of my observation, and indeed were not of a magnitude to excite general attention till/

till the month of March last, when, doubtless in common with many of my brethren I received by post a printed paper containing a general epistle from an Edinburgh Missionary Society signed by a Gentleman wholly unknown to me, and denominated secretary on reading it I was forcibly struck with a spirit of conceit which it breathes throughout."

(Ibid., p.46)

When the vote was called Heron's modest motion to appoint a committee of inquiry was defeated by 58 to 44. The official voice of the Church of Scotland had pronounced against missions to the heathen. It had also, by inference, pronounced against the Edinburgh Missionary Society, and in particular, against the secretary who was bound to bear the personal responsibility for the much criticised circular. Greville Ewing thus stood censured by the majority of the ruling court of his Church, exposed to gossip that questioned his integrity, his political loyalty and his discretion. There can be little doubt that the bitter memory of things said in this debate influenced his future decisions, especially since he had no opportunity of making any defence before the fathers and brethren. It made him seize all the more eagerly the opportunity afforded by the Missionary Magazine to submit the case to a more impartial/

impartial public, and, as editor, he was able to do much to correct the wrong impressions that had been given, wittingly or otherwise, by the Assembly debate. It further established him in the conviction that if the Gospel was to be taken to the heathen it would obviously now need to be done by other agencies than the Church of Scotland. He was therefore in a frame of mind to receive the news of Haldane's project with enthusiasm. The Lord of the Harvest was prepared to use other instruments if the Established Church proved to be disobedient to her heavenly calling. In Greville Ewing, Haldane met a man who had suffered unjustly, as he himself had done, for a principle in which he believed, and a natural bond of understanding was established between the two. However unknown the name of Ewing had been to Principal Hill and his moderate colleagues, they were unlikely to forget it.

On the third occasion on which Ewing figures in the business of the General Assembly he was once again 'in absentia', but this time he was no longer a member of the Church of Scotland. The date was 29th of May, 1799, and the business was the first of the day.⁽¹⁾
Ewing/

(1) The Edinburgh Advertiser of the date supplies us with a description of the scene: "This day the galleries were crowded, in every corner, with a beautiful assemblage of ladies of the first fashion."

Ewing had sent a formal letter of resignation to Edinburgh Presbytery, dated 1st December, 1798.

This letter came before them at their meeting on the 26th of that month, and his resignation was accepted.

The minutes simply note that "the said Mr. Ewing is no longer a minister of this church." Thus the matter might have quietly ended. But it was not allowed to do so. There were those whose concern for procedure provided a convenient cover for official vindictiveness. They were doubtless glad that their troublesome colleague was gone, but they were also determined that he should suffer the full weight of disgrace as a defaulter.⁽¹⁾

Thus he was solemnly censured and deprived!

"The first business was a reference, from the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale, against a sentence of the Presbytery of Edinburgh. Mr. Ewing gave in a letter of/

(1) E. was essentially of the respectable middle class and must have suffered keenly by this adverse publicity. The announcement of his resignation from Lady Glenorchy's appeared in the Glasgow Courier on Sat. 29th Dec. '98. Coupled with it was the news of another resignation, that of a certain Dr. Greenfield who had fled the country - "in consequence of certain flagrant reports concerning his conduct the Presbytery unanimously deposed him" It must have caused Ewing no little pain to be reported in the same paragraph with this absconding delinquent.

of resignation which they accepted. No protest followed but a member of Presbytery brought the matter before the Synod, and the Synod referred it to the Assembly. After a short debate, it was unanimously agreed, to adopt the same sentence as was pronounced in the case of Mr. Bayne, in 1766, namely, that Mr. Ewing be no longer considered as a minister of this Church; nor allowed to accept a presentation to any parish, or living in it; and that no clergyman of this Church employ him in any manner, unless this sentence be taken off, by a future General Assembly."

(Edinburgh Advertiser 5/6/99)

This decision was taken nem. con., but it came as no surprise. The following Monday the Pastoral Admonition anent Vagrant Preachers and Teachers was agreed to without a dissentient vote. The temper of the Assembly had thus altered considerably since the Missionary debate which had seen a substantial vote recorded against the Moderate leadership.

The reasons which influenced Ewing to withdraw from the National Church can be gathered from the kind of legislation that ensued in the years 1796-8.

(1) The Assembly vested the power of establishing Chapels of Ease in itself alone, thus controlling the pattern, rate and type of church extension. Regional courts were authorised to make preliminary enquiries, but

"such/

"such Presbyteries shall thereafter report the whole circumstance of the case to the next General Assembly; and shall not pronounce any final judgement till they should have received the special directions of the Assembly thereon" - adopted. From this judgement Dr. Erskine dissented, as it deprived Synods and Presbyteries of their radical power of judging in an important matter."

(Gen. Ass. 1796, Scots Mag. 58⁴²⁸)

(2) The same Assembly closed a loop-hole whereby non-parochial ministers might possibly have sat in the courts of the Church. Even in those days the Establishment was having nothing to do with dilution!

". . . . ministers of Chapels of Ease being in the habitual exercise of the functions of the ministerial office, are thereby disqualified from sitting as lay members in the judicatories of this Church."

(Scots Mag. vol. 58, p.427)

(3) The harsh decision taken by the Assembly of 1798 against James Gairie was profoundly disappointing to the Evangelical party, and particularly to Ewing. Not only were the two men contemporaries; not only had both had a business background before entering the ministry; but they shared a common bond in their link with Lady Glenorchy. As a young man Gairie had been one of her family chaplains and had attended her in her last/

last illness. In her will she had enabled him to complete his studies at a Dissenting Academy in Newcastle. Dr. Erskine thought highly of him, saying on one occasion: "I know not a better man than Mr. Gairie." (Historical Sketch, etc., Sievwright, p. 27).

Although Gairie had both popular support, and the eventual approval of Dundas, for the Crown presentation to the parish of Brechin, the Assembly rejected him:

" . . . not having received a proper university education in philosophy and theology, (he) is not qualified to act as a minister of this Church; the certificates of three Dissenting ministers in England is not satisfactory evidence of his being an ordained minister the Presbytery of Brechin not to proceed in presentation"

(Scots Mag. vol. 60, p. 359)

Thus ran the successful motion of Dr. Hill. The strict and inflexible legalism, the power of a centralised authority, and the rigid insistence on mechanical academic attainment without any concern for other equally important qualifications, was abundantly obvious in the method and content of this judgement. Rowland Hill met Gairie in Perth some weeks after this. In his journal he comments:

"I/

" I met with my old friend Mr. Geary (sic) . . . I knew him well He is a man universally respected, not being less pure and holy in his life and conversation, than evangelical and sound in his views of the Gospel. This good man though licensed as a probationer of the Church of Scotland was deprived of his preferment. What was the pretext? Mr. Geary had not an academic education Many persons with a natural thirst for learning, by private helps, and personal application, have appeared among the first of the learned world; while in our seminaries for public erudition, a stupid thick-headed set may undergo the discipline of an education which they receive against their will, and which they have no sense or appetite to digest; and after all appear, if they get into the ministry much more fit for gamekeepers, jockies, farmers or graziers, than ministers of the Gospel (p. 25) But such is the wisdom of the Church of Scotland, that the question with them respecting learning is, not, if he has it, but, where he got it; the learning of the most learned is nothing, unless procured at a learned place; no matter for the thing; the place is all; and I will venture to assert, as a proof of this, that many went after it to the right place, and never got it, and yet were sure to get the living wherever presented (p. 26). Mr. Geary was a well-known dissident from their moderation, therefore a more proper subject for their ecclesiastical castigation . . . (p. 27).

"Journal of a Tour, etc., Rowland Hill)

More grievous was the fate of James Young who had suffered similar treatment at the hands of that Assembly. His licence by Northumberland Dissenters was accepted by the Presbytery of Lauder, and his presentation to the parish of Legertwood was recommended by/

by the Synod of Merse and Teviotdale. A minority appealed to the Assembly which thereupon annulled the presentation and declared the charge vacant (Scots Mag. vol. 60, p. 359). Rowland Hill recorded simply: "He died of a broken heart"

(Second Tour, p. 14)

(4) From dealing with these particular cases, the Moderates moved on to general restrictive legislation, not only preventing any repetition of the cases of Gairie and Young, but also barring the pulpits of the parishes to all save ministers of the Church of Scotland, thus prohibiting occasional supply or friendly exchange even with the Church of England. The overture was presented to the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale in the autumn of 1798.

"To prohibit all ministers under the jurisdiction of this Church from occasionally employing any minister or preacher to officiate in their pulpits who is not a member of the Established Church." It was contended that such a regulation was indispensably necessary; that to employ ministers from England or elsewhere who are not of our Communion, tends to unsettle the minds of the people, and to foster that levity and love of innovation and novelty which has become too prevalent in this country; that it is inconsistent with the general spirit of our ecclesiastical constitution; that it is expressly forbidden in many of the laws and regulations both of church and state; and if permitted/

permitted would be attended with the worst of consequences. Doctrines might be preached very inconsistent with the standard of this Church, and as the persons who should preach these doctrines are not amenable to our judicatories, the mischief could not easily be redressed. The overture was agreed to by a great majority, supported by Dr. Grieve, Dr. Moodie, Mr. Finlayson, and opposed by Dr. Hunter, Dr. Kemp, Dr. Johnstone and Mr. Buchanan.

(Scots Mag., vol. 60, p. 789)

It must now have become plain to Ewing that he was out of sympathy "with a great majority" of his Church. Quite apart from the principle involved - whether any ecclesiastical court had the right to enforce such discriminatory regulations, particularly on such a narrow denominational basis - he was actively involved in evangelistic work with those who would automatically be proscribed from preaching by this overture when it became law, as it was bound to, at the following General Assembly. Possessing no voice in the Church courts, he could not speak in their defence. There remained but one course open to a man of Ewing's sensitive conscience. He could no longer continue in fellowship with an organisation which was so openly persecuting the Lord's people. Ewing could well echo the words written a generation ago by young Robert Ferrier of Largo, when, in/

in company with the elderly James Smith of the neighbouring parish of Newburn in Fife, he demitted his charge in favour of the principles of Independency:

"After many a painful struggle to sit still and eat our loaf contentedly, we were obliged to resign our livings and bid adieu to the Establishment. . . ."

(Scottish Church Hist. Soc., vol. 3, p. 135)

In such a distressed frame of mind was Greville Ewing when Robert Haldane approached him late in 1798 with his scheme for a private and Independent academy to train men for a Gospel ministry at home and abroad. He was ripe and ready to consider the scheme. It was as if God had opened a "great door and effectual", hitherto unknown. Regret there was at the prospect of leaving Lady Glenorchy's, but relief and release to be free from the restrictions of the Establishment. Ewing's account of this decision he gives thus:

"I came forward reluctantly to make a protestation, which necessity alone can ever justify, which necessity alone has been able to produce. I was not conscious of insincerity when I took upon me the vows of Presbyterian ordination, or of designed transgression, or neglect of duty while I acted officially as a minister of the Church of Scotland. Upon a change of sentiment I resigned my situation; The change I have spoken of was a gradual event While my scruples were growing, the state of my mind might no doubt appear, both from my public discourses, my public writings, and my private conversation Most certainly I avow/

avow myself a decided Dissenter
because I think that Christianity suffers,
when civil privileges are claimed by any
denomination of Christians, in their Church
capacity; I am moreover a Dissenter from
the Church of Scotland, because I am not
convinced of the divine right of Presbytery." (p.13)

(Animadversions, Ewing)

Thus we have examined the various factors within
the Church of Scotland which ultimately influenced
Ewing in his decision to withdraw from its communion.

SECTION II - LEAVING THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

(11) EXTERNAL FACTORS

We now turn to an examination of the religious situation outwith the Church of Scotland which had such opposite effects - of confirming Ewing and many others in Dissent, and at the same time, of provoking the Assembly to hostile action.

(1) The quiet visit in 1796 of the Rev. Charles Simeon, of Cambridge, was of seminal importance for the revival of Evangelical Christianity in Scotland. The character of this Church of England clergyman was marked by an unusual combination of gifts - deep spirituality, intense scholarship, practical concern for the spread of the Gospel, and toughness in adversity.

While religious circles were still buzzing over the outcome of the Missionary Debate in the General Assembly, Simeon arrived in the Capital as guest of the Rev. Walter Buchanan, and was introduced to the little circle that met for prayer and fellowship at the Rev. David Black's house in North Richmond Street, (Haldane's Lives, p. 142), where Ewing was a regular attender. James Haldane spent three weeks in his company, travelling on horse-back to Airthrey and the surrounding/

surrounding countryside. As a result of this companionship Haldane's religious convictions became intensified -

"With him Christianity had become all in all, and his whole soul, absorbed in the love of Christ, went forth in an ardent desire to promote His glory."

(Haldane, Life, p. 141)

He also saw the effectiveness of the tract distribution carried on by Simeon in the course of their travels. This was a new thing in Scotland, but rapidly became one of the most popular means of communication used by the itinerants.⁽¹⁾ In his capacious saddle-bags Simeon had an abundant supply of his little pamphlet entitled "The Friendly Advice", and he handed them freely to those whom he met on the way.

On returning to Edinburgh he preached in Lady Glenorchy's, and the experience of meeting a man like Simeon at that particular period of Ewing's development must have opened his eyes to new dimensions in the ministry. To one who knew only the cramping restrictions of/

(1) James Haldane adopted the practice wholeheartedly. The following year he and his two companions, Aikman and Rate, took a stock of 20,000, under nine titles, with them in their coach on their evangelistic tour to the north of Scotland.

of Established Presbyterianism in Scotland - the unfranchised chapels-of-ease, the jealously guarded parishes, the absolute power of the General Assembly - Charles Simeon represented a full and balanced freedom of Christian witness. Although faithful to the ancient establishment of the Church of England, he nevertheless calmly and joyfully owed a higher allegiance to Christ the King. His conscience was not in the keeping of the Convocation, nor did he find a clash of loyalties within the flexible framework of the Anglican constitution.

Further, the Scotland of Ewing's day was a denominational battlefield. The Secessions were not only critical of the National Church, but were busy in wordy strife among themselves. They contended over theological points that had little relevance to the real needs of men. Simeon cared little for these differences. His concern was the spread of the Gospel and the salvation of souls. His fellowship was with all those of a like mind, Church or Dissent, with whom he could work for the extension of Christ's Kingdom, and his interest lay in what was practical and possible, in friendly co-operation with men of goodwill in all denominations, rather than in perpetuating the supremacy of the Church of England.

(2) Although the General Assembly of 1796 had apparently thwarted the expectations of the missionary-minded in the Church, the triumph of the Moderates had a curious side effect. In their efforts to discredit the missionary societies, they charged them with neglecting the need for the Gospel at home. Dr. Taylor, in a closing speech, was emphatic:

"There was still a great deal to be done at home, all the more in consequence of the much that had been lately undone by the writings of Paine. He urged therefore that they should determinedly oppose themselves to the Age of Reason, and the overtures, and offer up prayers for the spread of the Gospel."

("Aec. of Proc. and Debate of Gen. Ass.
anent Missions", p.61)

If there had previously been any substance in this charge, it was certainly dissipated by the energy and enthusiasm displayed by the evangelical minority. The Missionary Magazine gave wide publicity to the rapid extension of the work in England (the Congregational Society for Spreading the Gospel in England, the Surrey Mission, the London Itinerant Society, the Reading Evangelical Society were all founded in 1797.)

In January, 1797, Ewing, in his capacity as editor wrote:

"Some/

"Some congregations (in England) are beginning to send out some six or eight of their best qualified members to converse with the poor in their neighbourhood. . . . with a view of teaching them the value of their souls let us in Scotland speedily follow the example "

(Miss. Mag., vol. ii, p.45)

The following month there appeared under the pen-name of Philadelphos an article that portrays both the condition of the times and the new spirit of evangelism that was in the air. It was marked by concern and commonsense. The writer begins by commending the work of the Missionary Societies, but admits the extent of the need at home, which all the pious hopes in the world will do nothing to meet:

"View the dark places of our own country and say if there be not something wanting to bring sinners to the knowledge of themselves and the grace of the Redeemer. We seem all to be sensible of this at a throne of grace; and if our prayers would convert them, every corner of our land would be filled with godly persons. However, something more must be done; let our prayers be accompanied by the most vigorous exertions."

(Miss. Mag., vol. ii, p.50)

Part of the answer appeared to lie in using the young men at the various theological colleges. These years of instruction were necessary, but it was unfortunate/

unfortunate that Christian workers were unable to take some part in spreading the Gospel at home during their student days. A plan to employ these men is outlined. They should be chosen for their piety and fervency, have an aptitude for preaching and teaching, and be willing to share in the work on a voluntary basis. The scheme should be operated under the supervision of the Presbyteries,

"but if Presbyteries cannot be found to adopt our plan, let two or three ministers, members of the Missionary Society, or other, who have the interest of the Redeemer's Kingdom at heart, joining together at prayer, appoint such divinity students as they may judge qualified to preach in those places that have not the Gospel, or are far removed from it, and after prayers, let them give such young men a commission to that effect."

(Ibid. p.51)

This is open incitement to ecclesiastical irregularity!

Through the week the young men would be employed in such jobs as they could find in the locality. On Sundays they would itinerate in the surrounding countryside, preaching the Gospel.

Their message would be simple, aimed at convincing and converting those outside a personal experience of Christ, nor would there be any disputings over denominational differences. An important part of their/

their responsibility would be for the children whom they found running wild. As far as possible, the students would work in co-operation, organising a simple circuit plan, so that the work would be as comprehensive as personnel permitted. The plan ends with an urgent plea for ecumenical penitence and concerted action:

"Brethren, we must lose our prejudices, to win souls to Christ
 Party spirit has indeed risen to such a height, that many think they are justified in saying, that all the endeavours of at least Dissenters in Scotland, in preaching the Gospel, are only to aggrandise their particular interests. Now, brethren, say if it be not necessary that something be done to wipe off this odium . . . Endeavour not to bring them over to any party, but to make them followers of Jesus, and heirs of eternal life. This being attained, they will adorn the doctrines of grace in their life and manners to whatever part of the Church of Christ they attach themselves."

(Ibid. p. 54)

The Moderates had themselves drawn attention to the magnitude of the task of home mission. The challenge was thus taken up with vigour by those whom they had supposedly discomfited. Greville Ewing, as editor of the Missionary Magazine, was the spearhead, and as a result of his advocacy, this and other ideas were given wide publicity. Through them all runs a vein/

vein of compassionate concern for people as well as an urgent evangelical obedience. Out of this spirit was born the first of the new Congregational Churches in Scotland.

(3) Having thus recognised the need for itinerant evangelism, it was a logical step to consider the qualifications necessary for the evangelist. If divinity students could be regarded as suitable, what, in scripture, was to prevent any Christian man from raising his voice to preach the Gospel, when, for him to be silent, would be for the Gospel to be unproclaimed? It was granted that there was a state of religious emergency in Scotland at that time. Extraordinary measures were therefore necessary to meet the situation. If ordained ministers of the Gospel were either unwilling or insufficient to cope with the added task of evangelistic outreach into the highways and byways of the land, then lay preachers in adequate numbers had to be enlisted. In the summer of 1797 a pioneer party set out by coach from Edinburgh bound for an extensive mission to the far north of Scotland. They were: James Haldane, who had but recently made a beginning in open-air preaching at Gilmerton/

Gilmerton on 6th May (Haldanes, Life, p. 147); John Aikman, retired merchant from the West Indies, attending divinity classes at Edinburgh; and Joseph Rate, a student from Dr. Bogue's Academy in Gosport.

The tour began on 12th July with a meeting in a schoolroom in North Queensferry, and ended, similarly, in a schoolhouse in Auchterarder on the 7th of November. During that time they travelled over 1,000 miles over some of the worst roads in Britain, and in their voyage to Orkney and Shetland faced the roughest crossings in coastal waters. Although handicapped by an accident they preached over three hundred times in all kinds of places, sometimes to a handful, often to huge crowds.

News of their exploits filtered south, and became the talking point of the time. But the controversy roused by these rumours was as nothing compared with the storm that broke when their journal was published. It was more than the manifesto of a new movement. To many it appeared to be a declaration of war against the Established Church. The daily entries, of themselves, are interesting and unexceptionable (given an acceptance of the principle of lay preaching). But the/

the candid opinions expressed in the lengthy introduction - 35 pages out of a total of 97 - were bound to provoke antagonism however well-intentioned the authors had hoped to be.

In order fully to understand the extent of the hostility aroused in the Church against the lay preachers it is necessary to examine the evidence upon which they were condemned. The "Journal of a Tour" went a great way toward supplying it.

Informative for a later age, but anathema to the Moderates of the time, is the statement of the theological convictions of the evangelists:

"We consider all mankind as being by nature under condemnation, and that none can escape the wrath to come, but by believing on Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh (1 Tim. 3 v. 16), who his ownself bare our sins in his own body on the tree (1 Pet. 2 v. 24). We are further persuaded that no man can say, from a conviction of its truth, that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. 12. 3). When any man believes this, we consider him as born again, born of the Spirit, without which he cannot see the Kingdom of God (John 3. 3). The means employed by the Spirit in the new birth, we conceive to be the word of God, as it is written in the scripture, or preached agreeably thereto; for faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Ro. 10. 17).

(Journal, p.5)

They then go on to explain why they adopted the practice/

practice of lay preaching. They were under the constraint of love to warn men of their danger, and to press them to make their peace with God. No licence was required to feed and clothe the poor - "why then should we require a licence to inform our brethren of a certain cure for diseased souls?" (p.7). The onus was upon those who opposed them to show from scripture that they were in fact prohibited. If the question of commission was raised - "who sends the lay preachers?" - the answer must challenge the authority of the Presbyteries - "who sent them?" Christ was the Head of His Church, and He alone sends His servants out, in a variety of ways, but for the same purpose of preaching the Gospel and making disciples.

The complaints had largely come from the parish ministers. They ought therefore to consider their own responsibility in evangelism. But many were too deeply involved in secular pursuits to have any time for their true vocation. The reasons for these pre-occupations were then examined and discarded. Was the stipend too small?

"It/

"It will be found that the stipends in general are fully sufficient to support a family, although certainly they will not afford to keep up that rank which has been thought indispensable for a minister Moderation and self-denial, not worldly rank, should distinguish the ministers of the lowly Jesus It would be useful to those who imagine that the credit of the ministry depends, in a great measure, on their making a creditable, or even genteel appearance, and who emulate the affluent in the expenses of their families to conceive of a more excellent way of maintaining the dignity of character becoming the ministers of Him who had not where to lay his head."

(Ibid. p. 19)

Did not the practice of farming, and other secular activities, make the minister popular with the people?

"To say nothing of the temptation to worldly-mindedness to which a minister having a farm, attending markets, etc., is liable, it has a bad effect on his people He is considered an intruder It frequently leads him from one step to another till it completely entangles him in worldly business"

(Ibid. 20)

But was farming not a form of relaxation, an opportunity of exercise, away from the study desk?

"The anxiety a farmer must frequently feel is more calculated to distract and fatigue than to relax the mind A minister in the country need not want an inducement to this (exercise) if he is disposed to visit and converse with his people either in their houses or in the field Visiting of parishes being so generally neglected, may be partly owing to the business of farming. We shall be glad to see this subject discussed"

(Ibid. p. 21)

This/

This was an attack upon a wide section of the ministry in Scotland, but the itinerants had launched their campaign long before the journal ever left the printing presses. During their tour they had attended the parish church on Sundays, and had taken the unprecedented step of publicly criticising the sermon that they had just heard preached if they chanced to disapprove of it. They took up their stance in the Churchyard, immediately after the service had ended, and declared their objections to the gathered crowd.

In justification, they pleaded the extreme urgency of the case.

"In every part of the country unconverted men are on the brink of destruction. We met with ministers who were trifling with their cases, leading them to trust in refuges of lies If we had only preached the Gospel many would have heard in that dull sleepy manner so common in many places of worship could there be a more probable means of leading them to examine scripture for themselves?"

(Ibid. p. 23)

They had found this task the most distasteful part of the tour, but had persevered in it because it had seemed to them the only practical way of achieving their purpose. It was a forlorn hope to imagine that the/

the ministers with whom they disagreed would alter their views upon the lay preachers' remonstrance, nor did they feel that they had any bond of Christian fellowship with them -

"Now we can never acknowledge a man as a Christian brother who perverts the Gospel of Christ."

(Ibid. p.24)

It was their opinion that the folk of the parish would be better to stay away from the church, rather than listen to erroneous teaching, always provided, however, they gathered privately themselves for prayer and Bible reading. There was a possible alternative, grudgingly allowed:

"they might find sound doctrine among the Seceders".

(Ibid. p. 24)

The unusual methods they used might be criticised on the grounds that the beating of the drum to attract the crowd, and the loudness of open-air preaching was a disturbance of the peace, but the curiosity that was thus aroused drew the attention of many who would never otherwise attend church or hear the Gospel.

There were many plausible excuses which ministers gave/

gave for avoiding the rigours of this kind of humble, vulnerable evangelism, but to evade the call was to court eventual degradation -

"If by their conduct they appear to others to be seeking their own ease and dignity more than the Redeemer's honour, they have much reason to apprehend they will soon lose that respect to which they have been accustomed, and which has in many instances arisen from a little of the leaven of priestcraft operating upon ignorance and superstition, and not from that discriminating regard due only to faithful ministers of Christ."

(Ibid. p. 32)

Such sentiments as these aroused the wrath, not only of the Established Church, but also of the Secession. What was additionally irritating was that thousands were flocking to hear these unauthorised amateur preachers, and neglecting their own churches to do so. Although not one of the party, Ewing was closely identified with them, and shared the reproaches that followed. Newton, writing to Campbell early in 1798, admitted the logic of the arguments for lay preaching but was less than enthusiastic about the Introduction to the Journal. He exempted Haldane and his companions from his general criticism of lay preachers.

". . . . the/

" the position that every man who thinks himself qualified to preach has therefore a warrant to go forth is productive of many bad effects Some of them, though they can smite with the hand, stamp with the foot, and speak with a loud voice, do not well understand what they say, nor whereof they affirm; their preaching is crude, often erroneous. They diffuse pride, censoriousness, antinomianism and party rage among their adherents. The characters of others are very suspicious, they run about to the neglect of their proper business and their families."

(Letters of Newton, p. 113)

It may have been politeness that made Newton exempt the northern travellers. But no such tender scruples attached themselves to the tirade of Glasgow's Moderate leader, Rev. William Porteous. His pamphlet, published anonymously, purported to be an account of a discussion among a company of plain folk gathered in the cobbler's shop, where "we discuss religion, politics and scandal with equal keenness."

The northern tour was discredited with sneers and coarse humour, first on the ground that the lay preachers were incompetent -

"I will bet you my awl, and it is a shilling more than I can well spare, that these gentlemen are speaking without experience. Will any man tell me, that he can practise in a trade properly without having first served an apprenticeship to it?"

(A Cobler's Remarks, p.4.)

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The second charge was one of fundamentalist bigotry -

"They have a suspicious way of proceeding.
They refer me to the Bible which I revere;
but then they will not allow me the use of
reason in judging of its contents
I am afraid those missionary preachers are
going to introduce Popery under a new shape"

(Ibid. p. 6)

Then followed the accusation that they resorted to bribery to create a favourable impression - "they appear to have made pretty free with the brass that their faces might shine." (P.9)

The conclusion of the matter was that they should be shipped out to the penal settlements -

"I am not very clear-sighted, but it seems to me, that those gentlemen want to go abroad as missionaries, and ^{have} been silly put upon this method, that they might get a free passage to Botany Bay I'll give them a squirt of my own quid, it is good enough for them"

(Ibid. p. 11)

This then was the feeling that was roused in many quarters against the itinerants. Men spat at the mention of their name. Greville Ewing, declared participant in the Bengal Mission, secretary of the Society, friend of the itinerant lay preachers and supporter of the project through the pages of the Missionary/

Missionary Magazine bore his own share of the abuse and sensed his growing estrangement from the Established Church. His reply to Porteous' lampoon is coldly controlled:

"The doctrine of the gentlemen engaged in the late itinerary in the north, who recommended the righteousness of Christ as the only ground of a sinner's acceptance with God, caused this honest cobbler to grin so horribly when he heard their Journal read, that he confesses he broke the only stump which had survived the gnashing of his teeth on former occasions. Conscious that he could no longer bite, he knew that he could nevertheless spit and hiss at the objects of his resentment; and to use his own cleanly metaphor, determined to give them a 'squirt of his own quid.' (p. 229) Ludicrous and low as is the machinery of this piece, we acknowledge it to be abundantly worthy, if not of the subject, at least of the author if perchance this cobbler should belong to that honorable order, whose rights he thinks the itinerants endeavour to invade, we should lament that he was not prevailed with to learn a business better suited to his genius and taste."

(Miss. Mag. vol. iii, p.230)

(4) One of the remarkable features of these years of re-awakening was the simultaneous emergence of a variety of evangelistic agencies, to such an extent that many thought that a co-ordinated master-plan lay behind them all. So widespread was this idea, and so fraught with sinister/

sinister implications that Robert Haldane was constrained specifically to deny it. (Haldane, Address to the Public, etc., p.61). In addition to the missionary societies, the itinerant schemes, the tract distribution, the independent journal, there appeared and multiplied the work described in the title of the organised body that was constituted in 1797 - "The Edinburgh Gratis Sabbath Schools Society." It was so-called to distinguish the service from that of other groups and endowments which employed teachers and catechists, eg., Lady Maxwell's School in Edinburgh and the S.P.C.K. in the Highlands.

The new schools were independent of official church supervision. They were supervised by a committee, generally interdenominational, and run, as the title states, on a voluntary basis. It is not inappropriate here to quote a story of Rowland Hill which illuminates both the conditions and the spirit that were typical of these schools. A rather haughty lady had visited a School one Sunday, and noted both the dirty ragged children, and the enthusiasm of the teachers -

"If it is a fair question, what do they receive for their services?"

"As/

"As to that," was the reply of the superintendent, "it is very little of this world's goods that they get, unless it is now and then a flea"

(Anecdotes of Hill, Charlesworth, p.94)

An interesting picture of the organisation of one of the new Sunday Schools is given by Ewing. The meeting starts at 6 p.m. Not less than 700 boys and girls attend. After prayer and praise the teacher asks the children the texts of the sermon they had heard that day, and attempts to emphasise the important parts. Next comes the catechism, suitably adapted for the younger children, followed by a period of scripture repetition. At the end of the meeting, the teacher hands out their tasks for the following week. Sunday School teachers obviously had their problems of discipline, then as now. One can detect much experience of restless children in the following comment:

"I am warranted from the advice of several teachers to recommend, as absolutely necessary, having a person, or where this cannot be obtained, three or four to attend alternately with the teacher, to keep the children in order."

(Miss. Mag. vol. ii. p.76)

Ewing was able to report that by the end of 1797,

34 schools were active in Edinburgh. (Life, p.138) Even more spectacular was the expansion of the work in Glasgow. Campbell describes how, after a week of intensive canvassing in the west, reports three months later describe sixty schools in existence. (Life of Campbell, p.129).

Ewing was invited by the E.S.S.G. Society to preach a sermon on behalf of their funds in Lady Glenorchy's Chapel on Christmas Eve, 1797. The Sabbath Schools promoters knew that they could expect a forthright exposition from the man who had on the earlier occasion declared -

"To speak only when we can curry favour, argues a servile spirit, which is by no means consistent with the faithfulness of integrity."

(Mem. Matheson, p. 105)

They were not disappointed. His sermon, entitled "A Defence of Itinerant and Field Preaching," is a reasoned, scriptural and passionate plea for the recognition of the office of evangelist and field preacher within the organisation of the church. The mark of truth is surely its continuing relevance, and by that standard this utterance is abundantly confirmed. His message for today/

today is as vital as it was for his own time. The objections he so forcibly answers are still made obstacles to open air evangelism in the 20th century.

It can never be enough for the Church simply to erect buildings for worship. These are necessary, but they are insufficient to meet the Master's command to go into all the world, to every creature. Indeed it is not unknown for the church to become an object of hostility to the masses - rightly or wrongly - and that hostility is often transferred to the Gospel itself. The only way this prejudice can be overcome is to go out after the people where they are, and even if they are engaged in other activities, there is a chance that they might listen.

It could be said that such a method might bring the church into derision, but this is a risk that must be taken. The preaching of the Gospel will provoke the mockery of unbelievers wherever it is heard, but there will be those who will respond, in church or at the street corner. Objectors on the score of unseemliness must examine their own heart in this matter, to see whether their reluctance does not stem from "tenderness/

"tenderness of themselves", rather than from a concern for the honour of the truth. Ewing, in fact, urges that the contrary is often the case - that the preaching of the Gospel in the conventional way is a barrier to many, and brings it into popular contempt -

"Popular prejudice maintains that the preacher is protected by express laws, and by powerful acquaintances and good neighbours. His situation is generally regarded as comfortable in regard to worldly things. His position in society is considered as respectable. His emoluments may sometimes be such as to offer temptation to the mercenary. These advantages are often supposed by the irreligious to be his real incentive in the discharge of his duty. He preaches, they say, because he is paid to do it. Whatever his creed, no doubt his business is a very good one. When, however, the preacher divests himself of the protection of all these things and commits himself to the open air to the unbiased attention of the passers-by, they cannot but allow that he seems at least to be himself convinced of the truth and importance of his doctrine."

(Mem. Matheson, p. 144)

A further argument might be that such an approach is too naive in a sophisticated age. This is to ignore the facts of society. Many people live on a very simple intellectual and social level, quite unaffected by the cultural development of the time. They would welcome the approach of those who could, in homely/

homely words, speak to them of the Gospel of Christ. Neither social fastidiousness nor intellectual snobbery should be allowed to hinder the work of establishing a contact of confidence with all classes of society, however inferior or uneducated they may^{be}/judged by the sophisticated.

Field preaching might undermine the good order of the Church, is another possible objection. This is quite groundless. The sphere of the lay preacher's labour is outside that of the normal life of the church, and has no concern either with its worship or its discipline. It is concerned solely with winning the unconverted to Christ and directing them into the stabilised fellowship. What would be in danger as a result of the inflow of enthusiastic new believers, would be -

"... the corruption of the church, the error of her tenets, the evil of her administration, the pride, the laziness, the profligacy of her clergy, the dead profession of her members. These are the things, wherever they exist, that are likely to be injured by that for which we contend; and what Christian will bewail their destruction?"

(Ibid. p. 147)

And/

And what of the accusations of sedition levelled against the itinerants? - a major issue at that time, when every suggestion of liberal thought, or experimental idea was branded as revolution and treachery. This suspicion tainted every type of evangelistic enterprise that was proposed. It was ~~a~~convenient, and, to many, a convincing, excuse to condemn what they had no desire to support. Ewing points out drily that there is as much danger of sedition being preached in the pulpit as in the field, indeed more so, for the pulpit is more secret than the street corner. But in either case the answer is the same. If sedition is discovered, let the law take its course.

Finally, a criticism, familiar to modern ears. "The results will not last." It is freely granted that there are many hindrances, but -

"... in preaching the Gospel, even partial and temporary success is not to be despised."

(Ibid. p. 149)

Ewing's reply might well be summed up in the words of the Chinese proverb: better to light a little candle than to curse the dark!

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The heart of the matter lies in preaching of the Gospel in every situation where the opportunity affords itself - this, supremely, is the mark of the genuine minister of Christ. Theological education and formal ordination, however solemn, can never be a substitute. And on the other hand, the humblest and most illiterate of men, unaccredited and alone, sincerely declaring the Gospel to those who would stop and listen, truly edifies and purely adorns the church of Christ.

Such a sermon was bound to cause a stir, especially since in its printed form it reached a wide public. It was true of him also, as he spoke to the Sabbath School workers and itinerant preachers "Many eyes are upon you. Many pray for your prosperity. Many watch for your halting." (Ibid. p. 154).

In the preface to the published version Ewing remarks that none of his critics reproved him on the basis of scripture. The leading consideration urged upon him was, that it was imprudent for any man in his situation to preach such a sermon at all, however true the doctrines might be. (Ibid. p. 157). But Ewing's concerns at this time were with weightier matters than with/

with prudence and propriety. Some mocker shouted after Thomas Gillespie as he made his way from his last Presbytery meeting after his deposition - "Make way for the man with the straitlaced conscience!" (St^ruthers, p. 232.) Ewing also was a man with such a conscience. If he felt in his heart, and found confirmation in scripture, that a cause was right, he was prepared to maintain it in the face of all the disapproval of the learned, influential and venerable. He now became a marked man. Such independence of thought and action was considered by many as stubborn contempt for the wisdom and counsel of his seniors.

Robert and James Haldane gave to the new movement of revival in Scotland its impetus, its energy, its practical sinews of service, but Greville Ewing contributed no less a part. His was the courage which proclaimed the new ideas within the old Establishment, but he was pouring new wine into old bottles. His was the spirit of adventurous obedience that led him to relinquish the preferment, protection and prestige of the National Church. His was the clear-sighted principle, the scholarly knowledge of scripture, and the determined purpose, out of which was conceived the vision of the Congregational Union.

(5) Towards the close of 1798 proposals to organise the work of the itinerants were discussed, and on the 11th of January the following year The Society for Propagating the Gospel at Home was formally constituted. The twelve directors were all laymen, and were drawn from different denominations. In a review of the state of religion in Scotland contained in the Society's preliminary "Address to the Public," they draw attention to the widespread apathy that had for so long persisted in the church. Not only had missions to the heathen been opposed, but it had been a matter of indifference to many, that thousands of their fellow-countrymen had only a nominal church connection, and multitudes more "were as ignorant of the way of salvation as the natives of Otaheite."

The measures adopted were of a temporary nature designed only to deal with the emergency -

"It is not our design to form or to extend the influence of any sect. Our sole intention is to make known the Evangelical Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. In employing itinerants, schoolmasters, or others, we do not consider ourselves as conferring ordination upon them, or appointing them to the pastoral office. We only propose, by sending them out, to supply the means of Grace wherever we perceive a deficiency"

(Address, p.4)

In/

In the first published Account of their Proceedings, covering the period ending 16th May, 1799, eighteen men were listed as having itinerated under their auspices. The list included Aikman, Rate, Gairie, Bennett and Ewing. Although the Society officially abandoned the blunt tactics of the original Northern Tour when they declared in their Letter of Instruction -

"Should you happen, however, to hear men of a different description, you are expressly prohibited from making personal reflections against them."

(Address to Public, Haldane, App. p. 13)

this did little to allay the alarm that was growing among the churches. It seemed as though this anti-clerical society was infiltrating the distant parishes of Scotland with agents whose aim was the subversion of decent religion, and the downfall of the Established Church.

(6) It was at this point that Robert Haldane, defeated in his determination to take a missionary expedition to Bengal, discovered an opportunity of diverting his considerable fortune into an alternative evangelistic enterprise. The S.P.G.H. was largely engaged in home mission work in rural areas. What provision was being made for the masses in the larger towns, who were equally outside/

outside the influence of the Gospel? In England there were large buildings where the poor could be accommodated free of charge to hear the great preachers of the day. Moorfields Chapel was built in 1753 for Whitefield, Tottenham Court Road three years later; Wesley's Chapel in City Road was opened in 1777; that of the Countess of Huntingdon in Spa Fields in 1779; and Surrey Chapel for Rowland Hill in 1783. In Scotland, Lady Glenorchy had gone some way to meet the need, but after twenty years an established congregation had been formed, the seats taken, and the services attended largely by the more conventional type of church-goer who held evangelical views. Consequently there was a real need for an open house designed to attract the attention of the "promiscuous multitude", without denominational ties, free from the stiff formality of conventional religious observance, and supplied by a variety of preachers who could speak with converting power to the people in a language they could readily understand. In the summer of 1798 Haldane and a small group of friends took a short-term experimental lease of the Edinburgh Circus, and invited Rowland Hill and three other ministers to share the services. The venture was immediately successful, and Hill's ministry in/

in particular, both in the Chapel and in the open air, attracted great popular interest. "The multitude that heard him, and the spirit of attention that seemed to be excited, encouraged us to go on." (Address to Public, p.71)

Ewing was much in company with this remarkable Churchman and had ample opportunity to mark the man and his method. Hill was a tall, commanding figure of a man, and every inch of him a genial religious revolutionary. As a young man he was denied preferment on the express instructions of the Archbishop of York, who gave orders -

"not to admit him to a further grade in the church, on account of his perpetual irregularity."

(Hill, Life - Charlesworth, p.27)

Even the Countess of Huntingdon named him in her will as one of the men forbidden from her chapels. (Ibid. p. 35) The journal of his visit to Scotland in 1798 reflects the ebullient evangelical enthusiasm that took the capital by storm, and kindled a heart like Ewing's to new boldness. Of his preaching to over 2,000 in a timberyard in Leith, Hill records - (what he must have openly declared to his companions),

"Plain language is the only profitable language for sinners like these. How ridiculous to try to get into the hearts of such by a dry set methodical formal discourse! As well attempt to/

to interrupt the course of the tide by the palm of your hand, as to turn the heart of a sinner from his accustomed abominations by such puny efforts. Can any therefor, but those who hate the salvation of souls, deny that they should be sought for out of the common way, seeing it is notorious that the means regularly and generally employed not only leave them just where they found them, but leave them to get worse and worse?"

(Journal, Hill, p.17)

On the conclusion of his tour, which took him to Fife and the West, he preached to a great crowd on the Calton Hill in Edinburgh, and comments with his characteristic gusty humour that -

" I most readily resigned my Calton Hill preferment to any Gospel minister who chose to accept it, together with all the rest of my airy pluralities in the north."

(Ibid. p. 51)

A willing candidate for the vacant offices was Greville Ewing, and his induction to these unorthodox but adventurous ministries came upon him with unexpected speed.

The first suggestion of a Tabernacle Scheme appeared in an anonymous article in the Missionary Magazine in 1797. Dealing with the widespread evils that had been the result of patronage ~~and~~ in the Scottish Church, the writer suggested possible remedies, including general repeal of the Law, but -

"the/

"the evil has taken such deep root, and is become such an engine of political influence, that there is no probability of seeing the majority of those who are interested, ever agreeing to part with their right, either freely or for a compensation."

(Miss. Mag. vol. ii, p.161)

There was, however, another possibility that merited investigation.

"From various causes it often becomes necessary for those who possess that power, to offer it for sale, and frequently unconnected with any other property."

(Ibid.)

In such a situation a man of wealth could make a splendid contribution to the cause of vital religion by purchasing these patronages as they came up for sale, and installing Gospel ministers in the charges as they became vacant. The personal reference to Robert Haldane was scarcely veiled.

"Some are willing to expend large sums in promoting missions to the heathens. Their zeal and benevolence deserve the very highest praise If such be in earnest let them here come forward, and be instrumental in promoting the knowledge of Jesus Christ among their countrymen"

(Ibid. p. 162)

To this challenge, Ewing, as editor, added a warmly commendatory footnote -

"We/

"We are happy to see our correspondent bring forward his plan; and we shall be very much surprised, indeed, if some of our wealthy readers, who agree with him in sentiment, do not take measures immediately for carrying it into execution."

(Ibid.)

Obviously, Ewing was here speaking, in some measure, out of prior knowledge. His support for the patronage of wealthy Christians in matters of religion was at this time sincere, but it was to alter considerably as a result of his subsequent practical experience of it. Here in this early letter we have something of the vision that inspired Robert Haldane to consecrate his fortune to the service of God. Although he eventually purchased Tabernacles rather than patronages, the basic issue was fundamentally the same, and the outcome was disastrous. Spiritual patronage was the rock on which the Tabernacle scheme finally foundered. It was this that caused the bitterness between the two pioneers. The unyielding, though sometimes unreasonably stubborn, stand of Greville Ewing against the dominating and persuasive personality of Robert Haldane, was one of the chief reasons why the young churches of the Congregational/

Congregational order survived the storm that broke about them in the first decade of the nineteenth century. They were not prepared to brook a higher power, however discreet and benevolent. Haldane could not submerge his distinctive opinions; he who paid the piper had to call the tune. Collision was inevitable.

But when Haldane proposed the scheme to Ewing in the late autumn of 1798 there were no such doubts. Ewing was ready to accept.

SECTION III - PASTORAL ADMONITION

Although Greville Ewing's relationship with the Church of Scotland had steadily deteriorated as a result of the internal and external factors we have just examined, his final separation from that communion came with unexpected swiftness. Thursday, 29th November, 1798, had been appointed a National Day of Thanksgiving, and Ewing preached on that occasion, unaware, according to R. Haldane, that it was the last time he would ever do so as a minister of the Established Church. (Address, p. 99). It is strange that he was led to take as his subject a theme so closely related to the controversial course of his ministry - "The Duty of Christians To Civil Government." It was an answer to the charges of disloyalty that had been laid against him and his colleagues in mission work, and an appropriate manifesto of his motives in separating himself from the Established Church. He enjoined upon his hearers, and undertook for himself, a subjection to principalities, powers and magistrates that was at once "conscientious, unresisting, disinterested, respectful, practical and pious." (Address, App. p. 37)

Two days later came his resignation. In that brief/

brief interval it had been conceived, considered and carried out. Decisiveness was a marked feature of his make-up. The circumstances surrounding his retiral from Lady Glenorchy's must have been painful for him. Haldane, writing ten years later, although prompted by resentment, as well as going by mere hearsay, nevertheless supplies some grain of truth.

"Has he (Ewing) forgotten, or does he think others have forgotten, the terms on which he parted with his colleague (Dr. Jones)? Does he not recollect that rather than join with that congregation in worship, he chose to spend the Lord's Day at home? Is he ignorant of the declaration of his sister, that in consequence of what had taken place with her brother, it was impossible for her to remain in the chapel?" (Remarks on Ewing, Haldane, p.8)

"... considering the animosity which existed when he left the Chapel, and which, as I believe, exists to this day"

(Answer to Ewing, Haldane, p.9)

His father thought he was "ruined", but his letter reflects his affectionate concern for a son he could not understand.

"... I leave you to God and your own judgement. And I promise, that I shall neither interfere, nor change my countenance to you. You shall be as welcome to my house as ever"

(Mem. Matheson p.184)

But/

But none of these things swayed him in his purpose. By the middle of December he was engaged in itinerant preaching in Perthshire, and an account of these wintry journeyings are contained in the first Account of the S.P.G.H. They read like the journals of Wesley, abounding in eagerness for souls, and filled with a warm compassion for ordinary people. He writes that he ended his brief tour -

" . . . safe, and in good health and spirits; more convinced than ever of the utility, importance and pleasantness of itinerating."

(Ibid., p.193)

Ewing's resignation did nothing to allay the anger of the Establishment at the unauthorised activities of the Sabbath Schools and the itinerants. Events moved to a climax made inevitable by the mounting volume of misunderstanding and misrepresentation. Nothing now could stay the storm. Had either side earlier exercised a charitable restraint in approaching the other, the eventual bitter outcome might have been avoided, but prejudice prevailed.

The missionary party, though thwarted and provoked, were nevertheless not free from blame. Their attacks/

attacks on the Moderates were often intemperate and arrogant, and the Missionary Magazine was in the forefront of the campaign. These examples from the review section illustrate the tone.

Early in '97 the minister of St. Giles preached a sermon occasioned by a National Fast Day.

"For what conceivable purpose could this thing be published? Was it necessary to proclaim to the world the shameful fact that, on a day set apart for fasting and humiliation, at a time of general distress and great alarm, a minister of the Church of Scotland delivered an address to his congregation, in which there was not so much as the most distant allusion to their sins, and far less to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ?"

(Miss. Mag. vol. ii, p. 184)

The following month a sermon by "Jupiter" Carlyle of Inveresk is dealt with, entitled "The Love of Our Country Explained and Enforced." The criticism is even more severe:

"If men will preach doctrines that are grossly erroneous, and of the most dangerous consequence, can it be consistent with love to truth and to the souls of our fellow-creatures, to allow them to proceed without deserved reproof?"

(Ibid., p. 227)

The reviewer then goes on to point out the errors contained/

contained in the sermon - the foolishness of unreasoning patriotism, the danger of imperialism, and the vanity of military glory. There is much to suggest in the style that the author is Ewing himself, but even if it is not of his composition, he must, as editor, bear the responsibility for its publication. Not only would the review give offence to the general public, whipped up into a mood of patriotic excitement over the war with France, but it was also an affront to one of the influential leaders of the General Assembly.

"After reading this most astonishing peroration we believe no sober-minded man, whatever be his opinions as to politics or religion, will think, that we either have been, or can be, too severe in our strictures upon such a sermon. We may even appeal to deists, and ask, whether any of them could wish to see the doctrines of Christianity, we say not more completely omitted, but more flatly contradicted Could Thomas Paine wish for a better colleague than a man who can preach the doctrines held by our author in this sermon?"

(Ibid. p. 231)

But Ewing's strongest declaration at this period against the Church of Scotland, was contained in an article he published anonymously in the Magazine, entitled "An Account of A Dreadful Conflagration, Etc." Possibly/

Possibly because he had a measure of freedom in secrecy, his sarcasm is unbridled. Employing an allegorical style, he describes a great city - Mundanum - which for years has been ravaged by a terrible fire. Many have perished, but the citizens display little concern. The humane king has despatched a special messenger who has instructed the people how to take precautions, and many have been saved. Special watchmen have also been appointed to see that all are warned and given instructions for safety. Under this form Ewing describes the ministry:

" watchmen, some of whom are silly, and others mad; while not a few are absolutely blind, or deaf, or dumb; or incorrigible drunkards, or mere hirelings, whose object is a piece of bread; or notorious traitors, patronised and paid by the common enemy, who originally set fire to the place corruption made its way among the watchmen. . . and a strife arose among its members, who should be stationed in the principle streets and squares; and while the lanes and suburbs were almost entirely neglected, the inhabitants of the splendid parts were jostled on every side by a turbulent set of fellows, who were more intent upon their own convenience than the general safety They seized upon the best mansions for their accommodation, so that instead of a watch-tower or a sentry-box, the watchman was oftener to be found in a palace.
If/

If people go to their (the watchman's) posts, instead of hearing them announce the hour of the night, or the state of the city, they will be amused by an account of its building, a plan of its streets, the history of its trade, or its diversions or its wars, or the news of the day. Upon the fire which is raging so tremendously, they seldom say anything, for that is a disagreeable, and they think, a hackneyed subject They are too proud to deliver the king's instructions but always propose some foolish impracticable, and inefficacious scheme of their own. One man produces the model of a fire-engine without water or power Another proves that this invention is all to no purpose, and substitutes a different one equally absurd. A third has the impudence to assure his audience that they have only to transform themselves into salamanders While a fourth has gone to bed himself, and left a parrot or a monkey to amuse the people in his absence"

(Miss. Mag. vol. ii, pp. 416-421)

Satire of such severity could scarcely fail to enrage those against whom it was directed, especially when it^{was} so generalised and indiscriminate. It denigrated the ministry of the whole Church, and united all sides in a common defence against calumny. This does much to explain why the 1799 Assembly was unanimous in addressing its Pastoral Admonition to its parishioners. The honour of the Establishment itself was at stake.

As/

As we have already noted, Greville Ewing's resignation from the Church of Scotland, although it delivered him from its discipline, did not spare him its denunciation. And what he suffered personally was inflicted solemnly and officially upon all who were engaged in unauthorised evangelistic work. The subject was introduced to the General Assembly as a result of overtures from the Synods of Aberdeen, and Angus and Mearns - the areas most disturbed by the Gospel travellers on the Northern Tour - "respecting vagrant teachers, and Sunday-Schools, irreligion and anarchy." The overtures were unanimously adopted, and a committee appointed to draw up a Pastoral Letter. Four thousand copies of this 2,000 word document were printed and dispatched to every parish in the country, the Assembly having enjoined that it be read from the pulpit the first Sunday after it reached the minister.

The letter opens with a preliminary dissertation on the unhappy state of the nation and the perils of the time - revolutionary excesses, atheism and regicide in France, rationalism and disaffection at home. The enemy is within the gates. The wrongdoers are explicitly named -

"It/

"It is much to be lamented that . . . there should of late have arisen among ourselves a set of men whose proceedings threaten no small disorder to the country. We mean those assuming the name of missionaries from what they call the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel at Home, as if they had some special commission from heaven, are at present going through the land . . . intruding themselves into parishes without any call . . . committing the religious instruction of youth to ignorant persons . . . or to persons notoriously disaffected to the civil constitution of the country; and connecting those schools to certain secret meetings You see men . . . pouring forth their loose harangues . . . censuring the doctrine or the character of the minister of the parish; studying to alienate the affections of the people from their own pastors; and engaging them to join this new sect, as if they alone were possessed of some secret method of bringing men to heaven. Much reason there is to suspect that those who openly profess their enmity to our ecclesiastical establishment are no friends to our civil constitution; and that the name of liberty is abused by them as it has been by others into a cover to secret democracy and anarchy."

(Mem. Matheson, p. 207-12)

It is well to remember how little ground these charges had, and the men who framed them must have known it. Ewing's sermon on Christian Obedience had been published six months before. It was an explicit declaration that submission to government, whatever its character, was an essential part of New Testament Christianity, and was therefore more in keeping with Gospel truth than the ambivalent attitude of The National Church.

"The/

"The politics even of those who boast the loudest of their loyalty, may be referred, I presume, to one or the other of the celebrated systems of Whig and Tory. As to the former, it is notorious that the Whig suspends his obedience to civil government, upon his own opinion of public measures. Even the Tory, who pleads for the divine right of kings, connects his allegiance with the reign of some particular family. Both hold it lawful to resist, by force of arms, a government of which they disapprove. But the men defamed as dangerous to the state, have declared, that they hold themselves bound in conscience to be subject to the powers that be, to the existing government of whatever form, in whatever country their lot may be cast."

(Animadversions, Ewing, p. 75)

This principle was also emphasised in the Introduction to the "Journal of a Tour (p.29)". The S.P.G.H. wrote it plainly into every part of their preliminary literature (Address, p.5; General Regulations, No. 1, p.9; Letter of Instruction to Catechists, p.11; Concluding Remarks, p.25; all from Haldane's Address, App.)

Finally, both from the published Regulations, and the extensive First Account of the Society's Proceedings, it was plain that no campaign of disrespect was countenanced against parish ministers, nor was there any intention of drawing away their people to form "a new sect", or of strengthening an existing one. The following paragraph indicates/

indicates the genuine evangelical catholicity of the Society at this time.

"April 2, 1799. Application having been made for preaching, from a Society of Christians in Paisley of the Congregational persuasion, they were answered, that it is no part of the design of the Society to support any particular connection; their sole object being to diffuse the knowledge of Jesus Christ without showing any partiality for one form of church government above another. Similar applications had been made from other quarters, to which the same answer was returned."

(Acc. of ~~Proc.~~ p. 79)

Thus the intentions of the missionaries had been made plain long before the committee appointed by the Assembly sat down to draft their Pastoral Letter. It is inconceivable that such information was unknown to them. The conclusion is inescapable, therefore, that they deliberately misrepresented the political motives of the SPGH. By playing on public fear of sedition, they thought they were best able to discredit the new movement in their midst. Political subversion was the pretext that was used to authorise the Procurator of the Church to proceed legally against unauthorised Sunday School teachers, on the basis of obsolete Acts passed by the old Scottish Parliament in suppression of "Papists and malignants". (Haldane, Life, p.257). But/

But the underlying reason was the fear that the traditional security of the ecclesiastical establishment was being threatened by ungoverned religious enthusiasm. Clerical monopoly in Scotland was being challenged for the first time since the Reformation. The instinctive reaction of those in power was to stamp out the dangerous tendencies inherent in unsupervised lay activity in religion. Threats and abuse were the clumsy short-sighted methods used to defend the dignity of the Kirk. She was ill served by such ignominious protection. Ewing's verdict on John Robertson's pamphlet ("Lay Preaching Indefensible etc.") applies equally to the spirit that inspired the authors of the 1799 legislation:

"All hypocrisy is detestable; but I know of none so detestable as that which is coolly written, with full premeditation he who can of steady design, and with no unusual impulse, utter falsehood, and vend hypocrisy, is not far from finished depravity."

(Animadversions, Ewing, p. 93)

Ewing's reply to this avalanche of ecclesiastical indictment was immediate and emphatic. His only opportunity of instant public retort was through the newspapers, which had already published the terms of the Assembly's rebuke and sentence. In a subsequent number he declared:

"Through/

"Through the channels therefore of your paper I appear before the world to assert my innocence of crimes which I detest; and to complain that I have been grossly libelled in the most solemn manner by the unanimous order of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland without the production of a single fact to my prejudice and without an opportunity afforded me of answering for myself or of obtaining redress. My principles respecting the duties of Christians to civil government which have been laid before the public, and read by many of my unanimous accusers are not those of conspiracy, sedition or rebellion, but the very reverse.

I challenge the whole world to produce the most distant shade of evidence that my profession in this respect has ever been belied by any part of my conduct I bless God that my life has been early devoted to nobler pursuits than those of worldly ambition I will preach wherever my lot be cast the everlasting Gospel I am, etc., Greville E. Ing."

(Mem. Matheson, p. 213)

Ewing was not, of course, the sole object of the punitive Admonition, nor was he alone in seeking to vindicate himself from its accusations. Rowland Hill, newly arrived in Edinburgh for a second tour, was scandalised, not simply because of the discriminatory legislation that had been directed against his preaching from Established pulpits, but because of the spirit of intolerance exhibited by the whole. In his journal entry for 7th June he writes that he arrived in Edinburgh and -
"found/

"found all the city quite thunderstruck at the fulminating bull just uttered against us from the General Assembly. And no wonder at the temporary panic, as the public must have conceived no body of people could presume to bring forward such pointed and direct accusations affecting even our lives, unless they had some foundation for their charges." In a grimly humorous footnote he adds: "Three reasons alone can be assigned for their conduct; madness, malice, or an attempt to discover our treasonable plots; and the first of these reasons should seem the most probable, the Admonition being dated on the day of the new moon."

(Journal of a Second Tour, Hill, p.9)

Hill was able to learn more of the local background to these events, for he tells us that his companion on part of his itineracy was his "dear friend and brother Mr. Ewen (Sic.)". With him he left Edinburgh on 19th June, and parted from him in Aberdeen, from whence Ewing had to return south to Glasgow to complete arrangements for the opening of the Tabernacle, at which Hill had agreed to officiate. (Jour. p. 14). It can be imagined that not only was the Admonition well discussed as the carriage jolted northwards, but Hill undoubtedly availed himself of a listening ear to pour out his lively ideas on evangelism, education and church order.

During the journey Hill composed a series of Letters/

Letters to the SPGH, in which he dealt caustically with the actions of the Assembly. These letters are dated 18th, 22nd, 25th, 29th June, 1st, 3rd, 12th, 15th July, and extend to 45 pages. Letters 1 - 5 were actually written while in company with Ewing, and in all probability were discussed with him. Indeed, such was Hill's preoccupation with denouncing the injustice of the Admonition that it seems to have blunted his effectiveness as a Gospel preacher. Campbell is quoted as saying that he never heard of any conversions as a result of this tour (Fn. Life, Haldane, p. 258)

Rev. George Burder, of England, who was currently supplying the Edinburgh Circus Church, also hastened to reply on behalf of the itinerants through the columns of the newspaper, and accused the Church of Scotland of "an intention to persecute, and a resolution to solicit the civil power to suppress religious liberty." (Mem. Matheson, p. 215).

The illegality of the Procurator's commission was quickly pointed out by Henry Inglis, Q.C., in a pamphlet published in August, 1799, in which he gave it as his opinion that Sunday Schools, because of their religious nature, came under the Toleration Act, unlike the/

the parish schools for reading, writing, arithmetic, etc., in which non-jurors were forbidden to teach by the Acts following the Rebellion.

("Answer to the Memorial and Queries for S.P.G.H.," by Henry David Inglis, Q.C., Advocate, Acc. of Cong. Ch. 1848, p. 9)

Typical of several similar corporate protests was one published by the Arbroath Sabbath School Society. They produce written evidence that they had acted with the approval of their parish ministers, and gave a simple explanation of the procedures that had been given such sinister significance in the Admonition - "secret meetings," "correspondence with other societies," "loose harangues," "new sect," etc. Shrewdly, they appealed to another tribunal than the Fathers and Brethren:-

"Parents, you will judge for yourselves, whether the religious instructions given by you to your children at home, aided by our endeavours in the Sabbath-evening schools, be more conformable to your duty as Christians, or to let them go about the streets on the Lord's Day, hearing and learning the language of Belial?"

(Address, Haldane, p.92)

The most comprehensive retort was contained in Robert Haldane's "Address to the Public Concerning Political Opinions and Plans Lately Adopted to Promote Religion/

Religion in Scotland, etc. etc.", published in 1800. In this apologia, which extends to 141 pages, he not only explained and defended his own conduct, but also gave an account of the origins of various unrelated Gospel enterprises, which, because of their innate similarity, were by this time beginning to coalesce into one stream of independent religious activity, outside the jurisdiction of the Established Church. His opening sentence runs -

"The gross misrepresentations of my conduct and views, and the unfounded reports to my prejudice, which have been for years past unremittingly circulated, compel me, however reluctant, publicly to vindicate my character and principles"

(Haldane, Address, p.1.)

But the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland was not to be moved by these pleas of innocence. She turned her face from those whom she had chastised and forced them into the wilderness. Although it was soon evident to unbiassed minds that she had acted hastily and unjustly, she did not make restitution to those whom she had wronged for more than forty years. In 1842, the General Assembly, by a unanimous decision, rescinded the Act anent Vagrant Teachers, and the speakers on that/

that occasion generously acknowledged the integrity of those who had been maligned. Dr. Cunningham described the action of the 1799 Assembly as -

"Eminently discreditable to the Church of Scotland (The Act was) passed for temporary purposes and upon motives and grounds which were now regarded as of the most erroneous and improper kind, and as amounting to nothing less than a hatred to the cause of Evangelical truth"

(Haldane, Life, p. 255)

Had Greville Ewing lived only a few more months, the old man would have rejoiced to learn of this final vindication. As it was, both Robert and James Haldane survived to see the day, as did William Innes, Brother-in-law of Ewing, who left the ministry of the Church of Scotland to become preacher in the Dundee Tabernacle, and Joseph Rate, student companion of James Haldane and John Aikman on the northern tour of 1797. That this should have been so is not only a token of divine blessing finally fulfilled; it is a measure of the physical stamina of the young men God raised up to be his heralds when Scotland lay in dark indifference so many years before.

CHAPTER FOURSECTION I - THE SEMINARY

Greville Ewing's departure from the Church of Scotland marked the end of a way of life. Gladly, he left behind him the compromise, the party machinery, and the spiritual apathy that had so distressed him during his six year ministry. But not all that he abandoned was bad. There was also a debit balance to be faced. Now that he was utterly on his own he could no longer count on the dignity and order founded on centuries of tradition; there was no system of government to which he could appeal; no brotherhood in ministry wherein to find counsel and encouragement. He paid a high price for his freedom. The frustrations he had known for six years as minister of Lady Glenorchy's was followed by a decade of acute controversy, all the more painful because much of it was on a personal level, and within a closely knit circle.

It is difficult exactly to discover the causes and course of this dissension, as the evidence is difficult to disentangle, but there are four distinct strands: - (1) The opinion of others, e.g. contemporary observers, the biographers of Ewing and the Haldanes, etc. (2)/

(2) The early letters written at the outset of the conflict, 1799-1803. (3) The later letters written at the height of the quarrel - 1808-9. (4) The interpretation placed by the principal parties on the trend of events, as they looked back over a period of fourteen years, as published in their pamphlets, 1808-10. The deciding factors in our assessment of the situation, made at this distance of time, must therefore be: the balance of probability, and the just analysis of character. There can be no certain verdict on the episode as a whole, but fresh light does emerge from an examination of the available material.

Robert Haldane returned from England late in 1798 with a clear vision before him of God's will. Since the frustrating of his plans for a mission to Bengal he had been uncertain of the future. Negotiations still dragged on with the East India Company and with the Government, but they only gave the appearance of reality to a project everywhere acknowledged to have failed. The unpleasant correspondence with Professor Robison and the undercurrents of adverse rumour had tarnished the idealism of the adventure.

But/

But the sourness of this disappointment was forgotten as a new door opened. Kindled by his companionship with Rowland Hill, and inspired by the renewal of his fellowship with David Bogue, Haldane conceived of a chain of Gospel Tabernacles throughout Scotland. Bogue's influence can be seen in the complementary part of the plan - the foundation and maintenance of a theological seminary for the education of young men for the ministry. It is this institution, and in particular, Ewing's association with it, that we shall now examine.

Its origins bear the mark of impulsive action. Haldane acknowledged in 1800 that he had no clear picture of the precise function the seminary was to serve. He says candidly:

"I know as little as the inquirer, where they
(the students) may be afterwards employed . . ."

(Address, Haldane, p.84)

If there was this indefiniteness about the ultimate destination of the students, it is reasonable to assume that the precise type of theological training had received as little consideration. Indeed, there had been no time for such close thinking. Nor did there/

there appear any need for it on Haldane's part. He admired Bogue and entrusted the details of the scheme to him. Haldane's talent consisted in the laying out of capital; Bogue's, in the administration and education of students. Let each then attend to his own responsibility. Such was Haldane's confident assumption as he returned to Scotland. He had already written to his friend John Campbell on 6th October that his plans were made, and all that remained to do was to select suitable candidates for instruction at Gosport. These plans, however, received a cool reception from those whose support he relied upon. Several objections were raised, not^{to}/the principle of establishing a seminary, but to the particular plan of sending the students to England, and even more, to putting them under the tuition of Dr. Bogue. There were political implications in such a step. At that time the south coast towns were centres of Jacobin activity, and Dr. Bogue himself was well-known for his democratic sympathies. Haldane maintains that Ewing was the most emphatic of the objectors, and that it was solely due to his insistent representations that he (Haldane) decided to cancel his earlier arrangement. It is reasonable to suppose that Ewing's caution is a repetition of/

of his doubts, already expressed, of an unnamed member of the mission to India - probably David Bogue.

The transfer was hurriedly arranged while Haldane, Gairie and Ewing were in Glasgow, examining the property in Jamaica Street, and interviewing prospective students.

Ewing's account of the incident is materially different. He admits that he voiced his doubts about the Gosport plan, but only in common with others. He claims that it was James Garie of Perth who advanced the name of Ewing as a suitable alternative tutor. Garie was by this time dead, but Ewing quotes a statement from John Aikman (F. & D. Fn. p. 27) to the effect that Garie himself firmly believed that this was so. Ewing declares that it was Haldane who took the initiative in suggesting to him that he be responsible for the classes. He accepted with reluctance, and only on the grounds that -

"unless I would undertake it, the class must go to England; and my consent was given, entirely on the ground of its being the only way of avoiding a measure, which, we all saw, was generally thought inexpedient."

(F. & D., Ewing, p. 28)

In/

In reply, Haldane admits, that Garie did mention the matter, but he attached little weight to his opinion. On the contrary, he declares that not only did Ewing list his own qualifications for the post as tutor, but he also quoted the opinions of others to the same effect, so desirous was he of obtaining the post. (Answer, Haldane, p. 25).

These contradictory accounts nevertheless explain one fact. They make sense of the suddenness of Ewing's resignation from the Church of Scotland. The Glasgow Tabernacle was not to be ready for worship till the summer of 1799, but when Ewing returned from Glasgow to preach the sermon on "The Christian's Duty" he had already undertaken the post of tutor. All that then remained was the date of commencement. The following day Haldane himself arrived back in Edinburgh, his plans now complete. The first term of the Academy was fixed to begin on 2nd January, 1799. Ewing thereupon severed his connection with the Church of Scotland.

The financial arrangements which Haldane proposed, and to which Ewing agreed, were as follows: The class was to consist of twenty students, and for each/

each of these Ewing was to receive £10 per annum, on condition that he should supply them with grammars in English, Greek and Hebrew, and a geography text-book. It is interesting to note, that even at this early stage, Ewing compiled, and had printed at his own expense, a Greek Grammar and Lexicon for class work. Ewing was also responsible for assembling and maintaining a suitable library. While he remained in Edinburgh the class met at his house in Rose Court, and on his removal to Glasgow the vestry of the Tabernacle was fitted up as a classroom. These arrangements were arrived at verbally, nor was there any subsequent written agreement. Haldane increased the number of students in this first class to 24, without additional payment, and to this Ewing agreed.

Was Haldane ever really satisfied with Ewing as a tutor? Differences between the two men were early evidenced, but these might be explained on the grounds of temperament. It is not so easy to decide at what point fundamental relationships of confidence broke down. Thus in 1810 Haldane recollects -

"He had not enjoyed the advantages of uninterrupted education As a classical scholar, he was not distinguished. Of the modern languages he knew little if any - nothing at all. He had very little knowledge of history and was deficient in general reading. His/

His acquaintance with the Hebrew language may be judged from this circumstance that when he had not time beforehand to prepare the daily elementary lesson, it was necessary for him to defer giving it out."

(Answer, Haldane, p.34)

Haldane does not say when he began to realise Ewing's intellectual inadequacies as a theological tutor. It is unlikely that he entertained them while Ewing was in his employ, otherwise it is difficult to explain why he tried so hard to prevail on Ewing to remain after he tendered his resignation.

Ewing on the other hand assigns a precise date to the disruption of their relationship. It occurred, not long after he had gone to Glasgow to preach in the Tabernacle. Within nine months of the inception of this generous and imaginative scheme for missionary expansion at home and abroad, it is melancholy to discover such depths of personal animosity, on one side at least, as is reflected in the following passages:

"Hitherto Mr. Haldane had behaved to me with the utmost appearance of cordiality and respect. When in any instance he acted otherwise, he showed himself eager to make an apology, and to correct what was wrong. On my coming to Glasgow a new scene began to open. I soon found myself involved with a gentleman, who could easily change from the most insinuating to the most repulsive manners, from the highest professions/

professions of confidence to the lowest suspicions of jealousy; who must ever interfere, but never be contradicted; who being pleased with no plan after it was once set agoing, was always insisting on some alteration; and who had the strangest propensity I had ever seen to endeavour to argue people out of their senses and memory, in order to persuade them that previous agreements were entirely consistent with every new idea, however opposite, which had since occurred to him With all the labour and difficulty of preaching in a new place, and teaching young men who were studying for the ministry, there came upon me daily the vexatious and endless task of maintaining 'discussions' with Mr. Haldane. When he was with me, or I with him, the day and part of the night must be occupied in 'discussions'; and when separate, few weeks passed in which besides preparing for the class and the pulpit, I had not to prepare what to me was most wearing out and distressing, a letter of 'discussion' generally on some unpleasant subject, in reply to voluminous letters from Mr. Haldane."

(F. & D., Ewing, p. 29)

Ewing's dissatisfaction appears from his letters of the period to be concerned with three distinct aspects of the conduct of the Academy. The first was the financial one. Quite apart from his own arrangement with Haldane, he was perturbed at what he considered Haldane's parsimonious attitude towards the students. Although the country was passing through an inflationary period, with prices everywhere rising rapidly, Haldane made no attempt to increase the student's subsistence grant/

grant proportionally, and Ewing saw every day the consequences of this added hardship. Haldane showed his displeasure when Ewing suggested an increase, saying that it was quite unnecessary "to treat them . . . so much like gentlemen." (F. & D. p. 70).

Evidence of the deteriorating relationship between the two men is revealed by their touchiness over the comparatively trivial matter of the provision of a bookcase with glass doors purchased for the classroom vestry. Ewing assumed that Haldane would undertake the payment, and was offended when he refused to do so. Ewing accused Haldane of insinuating that he (Ewing) "was capable of attempting to use improper liberties with his purse." (F. & D. p. 52). Haldane replied, "I must say you appear to me to be very unreasonable in this businessI confess that I was astonished when Mr. Harley presented the account of it to me." (F. & D. p. 57). These exchanges took place in June, 1800, eighteen months after the seminary had begun. As a business item it was a small matter to Haldane. But it was very different with Ewing. With him a large issue was involved - his pride.

Ewing's/

Ewing's main complaint, on the financial level, however, was that Haldane was both inconsistent and patronising in his payments to Ewing for his services as tutor. The original terms of £10 per student he acknowledged as "very liberal", (F. & D. p. 28), nor did object when the number of the first class was increased to 24 without additional payment, nor even when Haldane further proposed that £200 should be the set salary, whatever the size of the class. The consequence of this was, that the second class was double the numbers of the first. But this was by no means the end of Haldane's re-adjustments. In June, 1800, he revealed the basis of his original offer - Dr. Bogue received £40 per annum for four students, and Haldane had decided to give him the proportional amount for 20, ex gratia, and had extended the privilege to Ewing on the transfer of the scheme from Gosport, though, as he said, -

"I may be wrong, but I believe £200 a year is much above the usual payment expected for such business."

(F. & D., Ewing, p. 56)

Since, therefore, Ewing had already received £600 for three years' tuition, Haldane suggested, late in 1800/

1800, that the fee should be reduced to £100 per annum. In support of his proposal he quoted the salary of the tutors in the Welsh and Hoxton Academies. Such an argument had little appeal for Ewing, and he felt that he could no longer tolerate such uncertainty. On the 5th of January, 1801, he informed Haldane that he was not prepared to undertake the instruction of a further class after the termination of the second, at the end of the year. Drily he remarks that had he not taken this step he -

"might soon have said, as Jacob did to Laban,
'thou hast changed my wages ten times.'"

(Ibid. p.29)

It was not this inconsistency alone that provoked Ewing. It was the thought that for three years he had been taking money from a man who secretly believed he was over-paying him -

"A man cannot but be mortified when he finds, that instead of earning a salary, as he had been led to suppose, he has been considered as an object of bounty."

(Ibid. p. 72)

Such a relationship a proud spirit like Ewing's could not endure. It is true that pride fosters over-sensitiveness/

sensitiveness, and in all fairness to Haldane, it is reasonable to suppose that Ewing exaggerated the condescending spirit in which the suggestion of a cut was made. Tension of this kind almost of necessity must exist in such a relationship between a man of wealth and position, and one of lesser means and humbler origins. Grace and forbearance from both parties are indispensable. In this case these qualities were lacking. Ewing went so far as to suspect that the proposal of a reduction in salary was a ruse employed by Haldane to force his resignation because of the disagreement that had arisen between them over the conduct of the classes. (p.52). Thus Ewing expressed his feelings in December, 1800, in a letter to Haldane, written but never posted as a result of sudden bereavement.

"I look back with the deepest regret on the day when I agreed to receive one farthing of that £600. . . .
 (I entreat) that no more of that dangerous and ensnaring sum may be sent to me. Let me endure, if it must be so, disappointment and loss, but let me not knowingly barter for money, that independence of mind, that liberty of action, which, next to the blessings of the Gospel itself, I am bound to contend for, as invaluable and sacred."

(Ibid. p. 76)

Although/

Although these are fine words, it must also be noted that, as far as can be discovered, Ewing never stood to suffer financially as a result of his loyalty to principle. He did not agree to take part in the mission to Bengal till ample provision had been made for his future security. When Haldane approached Ewing later about the Glasgow Tabernacle, he proposed that the salary should be £150 - the amount Ewing was receiving at that time in Lady Glenorchy's. But Ewing refused, saying that he could not do with less than £200 in the new situation. This figure was then agreed upon. When the seminary was hastily transferred from Gosport, Haldane soon began to regret that the generous terms, intended for Bogue whom he heartily admired, had also been transferred to one for whom he had not the same regard, and with whom he had already agreed a generous settlement. Ewing was in the anomalous position of having left the Established Church and become a Dissenter, yet his income was nearly tripled. Haldane says bluntly -

"Mr. Ewing therefore ran no risk. This was so notorious, that many ascribed his leaving Lady Glenorchy's Chapel to selfish principles."

(Remarks, Haldane, p. 41)

Certainly/

Certainly Ewing did not leave the Church of Scotland till after the negotiations to transfer the seminary to him had been completed.

In the light of these facts a final question must be asked, to which there can only be a conjectural answer. To what extent did private circumstances influence Ewing to terminate his engagement with the classes? In October, 1800, he remarried. His second wife, Janet Jamieson, daughter of a deceased Jamaican merchant, may well have had a comfortable patrimony, which would have become Ewing's on her death, after child-birth, fifteen months later. And is it coincidental that only a few months after he had finished with the second class, he was married on 15th November, 1802, to Barbara, youngest daughter of Sir James Maxwell, Bart. of Pollok, and step-daughter of Sir John Shaw Stewart, Bart., of Ardgowan, whom her widowed mother had re-married?

The second grievance conceived by Ewing with regard to Haldane's conduct towards the seminary seems to have arisen out of the fact that insufficient preliminary thought had been given to the ultimate purpose of the scheme, and hence there was no firm original/

original plan of curriculum. The two men were soon at cross-purposes over the methods, scope and nature of the classes. Ewing maintained that his purpose in undertaking the work was to do what he could to give the students a grounding in Hebrew and Greek, so that they could then go on throughout the subsequent years of their ministry, to acquire a thorough knowledge of the scriptures. But he soon found that -

"from this condition, which I thought the most important one in the whole scheme, Mr. Haldane often showed an earnest desire to depart What teased me most in the matter, was, that he was always most opinionative on those subjects, with which he was least acquainted."

(F. & D. Ewing, p. 68)

The contemporary correspondence Ewing produces to illustrate this interfering criticism makes it plain that Haldane exercised a proprietary attitude towards the regulation of the teaching plan, as well as revealing his tendency to have second thoughts. As early as January 24th, 1800, only a year after the seminary had been established, he wrote to Ewing -

"You mentioned that you intended to begin the Hebrew with the students. The impropriety of this did not, I confess, strike me so much then as it does now. I have been considering it and I must really request, that, for the present, at least, you will give up thoughts of it."

(Ibid. p. 69)

This/

This re-appraisal of the situation, though it was ill-received by Ewing, is nevertheless sincere and shrewd, and indicates how intensely Haldane was aware of the immediate evangelistic task. Haldane was not at that time opposed to the normal type of classical theological education in principle, but he felt that such an extensive curriculum was impossible to implement in a short course of study, and might well prove, in the long run, a waste of time that could have been more practically employed. It might also tend to breed a spirit of conceit among men who ought rather to be preparing themselves for the humblest opportunities of service as evangelists among the least educated of the common people.

Had the matter been more maturely deliberated, had a deeper bond of confidence existed, had there been a wider consultation, there might have been a basis of agreement. But from the beginning Haldane's impetuous initiative, and Ewing's proud and stubborn reserve, came into collision over an issue where there had never existed a confident common understanding.

Ewing's third ground of complaint concerned a habit of Haldane's which Ewing detested. Although Haldane/

Haldane rarely visited the classes while they were in progress, he nevertheless maintained a close contact with the students, and often invited them to visit him when they were in Edinburgh, or when he had occasion to be in Glasgow. During these interviews, he would question them about the conduct of the classes, and on the strength of these clandestine interrogations he would thereupon write voluminously to Ewing, offering gratuitous criticism and advice. Ewing considered this behaviour as a violation of his responsibility and status as tutor, and an exploitation of Haldane's own position as the wealthy patron of the students. In the letter already referred to (24/1/00) is to be found an example of student gossip employed to rebuke the teacher.

"J.C. when here, told me the Greek took him up four hours a day, and others seemed to speak as if they had little time to read. - This is certainly wrong; I think you should not take up so long time with it"

(Ibid. p. 69)

With regard to this overburdened but nevertheless loquacious young man, J.C., Ewing makes the following devastating comment in a footnote - an acid, school-masterish aside -

"If/

"If this was really the case, (four hours at Greek), he must have been four times slower than the dullest boy I ever met with."

(Ibid. p. 69. fn.)

Such a difficult situation could not continue indefinitely. Ewing was unhappy about the financial relationship between himself and Haldane; at cross-purposes over the curriculum; annoyed at what he thought was going on behind his back between Haldane and the students. He therefore notified Haldane on 5th January, 1801, that he could no longer undertake the instruction of the classes, after his engagement with the current one (the second) had been completed at the end of the year. In his letter he endeavoured to be fair to Haldane, and to end the relationship in dignity and friendship. The concluding paragraph reveals not only the distress of a man but recently bereaved, but of one deeply disappointed by failure and regret - the cry of a hurt and over-burdened spirit:

"I conjure you, my dear sir, by all the laws of brotherly love, to let this matter now rest. So far from wishing to thwart you, or in any respect to indulge a refractory temper, I can say with truth, I should dislike such a discussion in any case, but especially with you. It has deprived me of sleep. It has very/

very sensibly affected my health, and my capacity for present duty. Surely if you knew how unfit I am for trials of this kind, you would acquiesce at once in the propriety of endeavouring to prevent occasions of them."

(Ibid. p. 78)

But such a piteous appeal fell on deaf ears. Haldane refused to let the matter rest and repeatedly sought to reopen discussions. During the remainder of the second class Haldane harried the unfortunate Ewing, was grudging and unpleasant in his payments, and -

"Always put him on his defence, as if in refusing to go on teaching the classes, I had absolutely proposed the commission of a crime."

(Ibid. p. 79)

In this unhappy fashion Ewing's relationship with Haldane in the seminary scheme came to an end in the spring of 1802. What had begun with such enthusiasm and expectancy terminated in division and disillusion. Haldane's work continued apparently unaffected by the departure of the tutor. The classes were transferred to Dundee and then to Edinburgh, and were maintained there for several years.

There is a sequel to these events which throws light, not only upon the unhappy association of this period, but also upon the strange mixture of Haldane's make-up.

In/

In the spring of 1803 Ewing recounts how he met Haldane by chance in Edinburgh. To his great surprise Haldane re-opened the subject of the seminary in an argumentative way. He reiterated his old complaints. He accused Ewing of neglect and irregularity in his conduct of the classes; of spending too little time with the students and giving them insufficient tuition; of pampering the young men, failing to discipline them in early rising and in systematic reading; and much more in the same vein. Ewing, nettled, had attempted to vindicate himself, but to no purpose. Haldane continued in his diatribe "with uncommon heat". Finally Ewing asked why, at such a late date, Haldane was bringing up all these old grievances. The answer he received was an unnerving as it was unexpected:

"Because I have been mentioning these things to some others, and I thought it better to tell you also myself, than that you should hear it through another channel."

(Ibid. p. 79)

Naturally Ewing demanded to know the persons to whom Haldane had made these accusations so that he might have an opportunity to put his own point of view, but Haldane refused to divulge any names on the ground that he/

he could not remember how many he had spoken to on the subject -

"In short I found myself bitterly accused and calumniated, and deprived of all means of redress. . . ."

(Ibid. p. 80).

Such an incident reveals the dangerous, malicious aspect of a volatile nature that could also be generous and affable. It also displays a lack of human understanding in personal relationships. It is little to be wondered at that the moment came when Ewing refused to have conversation of any kind with Haldane. Behaviour as is here displayed could never be consistent with complete honesty, and forbade any further trust from one who felt he had been deviously dealt with.

SECTION II - THE TABERNACLE

The idea of establishing a Tabernacle in Edinburgh was probably originally suggested by Charles Simeon (Life, Haldane, p. 216) during his second visit to Scotland in the spring of 1798. The advantages for evangelism in such a place were obvious. Since it was undenominational the Gospel could be preached without sectarian qualification; since it would have no regular preacher, the attraction of variety would be constant, and the most effective evangelists could be secured for occasional supply; and since it was to be supported by private means the seats could be free to all, a particular advantage in reaching the poorer classes.⁽¹⁾

Although such places were familiar in England by this time, it was a new venture in Scotland, and those who were the original sponsors in Edinburgh, displayed their caution in renting the Circus for a few months only, in the first instance. Haldane was responsible for inviting Rowland Hill to be the opening preacher (Life, Haldane, p. 208). From the first the experiment was a success. The public was already familiar with the idea of/

(1) Not only were seat rents the rule in Scottish churches, but a system of payment at the door was quite common; sometimes this extended even to standing room!
(Address, Haldane, p. 75)

of the Circus as a place of worship, as it had been used by a Relief congregation while their own building was under construction, and the eloquence of Mr. Struthers had attracted attention. Rowland Hill was a worthy successor, and on the opening day, 29th July, he preached to a packed crowd of 2,500 (Journal of a Tour, p. 15) - and at the hour of seven o'clock in the morning! Greville Ewing was a regular attender at these services, and also in the evenings that summer, when crowds assembled on the slopes of the Calton Hill to listen to Hill's preaching. He also had the opportunity of meeting the visitors from England, and it was at this time that he was introduced to Dr. Bennett, and other leading Dissenters. (Mem. Matheson, p. 170).

As we have already noted, Haldane accompanied Hill on his return journey to England, after the Scottish tour, in the early autumn. This intimate itineracy with such a spiritually dynamic personality as Hill kindled a new vision in Haldane's heart. The prospect of the Indian mission had faded, and there had as yet appeared no clear alternative plan. The means were now available. On June 16th, earlier in the year, he had paid/

paid the labourers at Airthrey for the last time. The negotiations for its sale were complete. (Life, Haldane, p. 207). All that was lacking was the guiding of God as to how he should lay out the proceeds to His glory. Dr. Bogue and Rowland Hill helped him to see what that plan should be. If the Edinburgh experiment was so obviously successful, why not extend the scheme to other populated parts of Scotland? He was in a position to establish and support Tabernacles on a wider scale than had ever been dreamed of, even in England. He had the money. He had the contacts with outstanding English preachers who would help occasionally. And he was confident that he could count on the co-operation of his colleagues in the Bengal scheme. His brother, James, had emerged as a powerful and unusual preacher, and could be trusted to hold the fort in Edinburgh. Greville Ewing, he knew, was restless and unhappy in the Established Church, and might well be willing to pioneer in Glasgow. James Garie in Perth had been disowned by the Church of Scotland, and was already preaching and itinerating independently. He would surely rejoice in the new scheme. And he was confident that William Innes, with whom he had been intimate earlier, would undertake the work/

work in Dundee. He visualised a chain of independent undenominational preaching stations, occupied by able men working in close co-operation, to reach the unevangelised multitudes of urban Scotland.

Ewing had originally been unfavourably disposed to the Edinburgh experiment, probably on the grounds that -

"the church was in danger; and that if the tabernacles did not overturn it altogether, they would at least draw multitudes of people from it."

(Address, Haldane, p.70)

Whether this was his reason, or not, he was one of a deputation of clergymen from the Established Church who called on Haldane in an effort to dissuade him and his friends from going forward with the Tabernacle (Letters, Haldane, p.41). The success of the scheme was sufficient to alter his views upon the matter, and he was disposed to accept Haldane's proposition when it was put to him round mid-October, 1798.

This decision was taken with the knowledge that the venture would be difficult but the Glasgow station was an integral part of the scheme, and Ewing accepted the challenge.

"I/

"I had at the very time, proposals made me of a far less difficult situation, at Edinburgh, and, indeed, felt it a great sacrifice to leave that place; a sacrifice which I would not have made, but for the scheme of establishing Tabernacles, not merely at Glasgow, but also at Edinburgh, and Dundee."

(F. & D. Ewing, p. 24)

In mid-November, Ewing, Haldane and Garie went to Glasgow to view a suitable building for the projected Tabernacle. This was a riding arena on the corner of Ann Street, on the West side of Jamaica Street. It had already witnessed other new ventures.⁽¹⁾ Both its size and its situation commended it, and so Haldane purchased it, and arranged for it to be fitted out at a total cost of nearly £3,000 (Remarks, Haldane, p.21) In July, 1799, it was finished and Ewing enlisted the help of Rowland Hill for the opening services.

Glasgow learned of the arrival of the great English evangelist from an advertisement in the Courier:

"The/

(1) "The Equestrian Circus in Jamiaca Street opened yesterday evening; and there is not a doubt but Messrs. Parker and Rickets will meet with the encouragement they so justly merit the equestrian performers may very justly be declared the first in Europe," Advt. Glasgow Courier, 20.3.92.

"The Rev. Rowland Hill, from London, will preach on Thursday morning at eight o'clock in Mr. Stewart's Church, Anderston, and in the evening at half past six on the Deanside Brae. N.B. There will be no collection."

(Glasgow Courier, 16.7.99.)

Obviously he did not intend frightening away the thrifty Glaswegians!

At the first service in the Tabernacle more than three thousand crowded in, and hundreds were turned away. Ewing himself conducted the afternoon service, when to his dismay -

"an alarm was given that a part of the building was falling; the people in a body immediately rushed towards the doors and windows to get out; the consequence of which was almost all the lower windows were smashed in pieces, and part of the iron railing and steps of the stairs were broken down, by which a great number of people fell to the ground. Several persons had their arms and legs broken; one poor woman upwards of sixty years of age who had her thigh broken was carried to the Infirmary. The terror was so very great that many of the people left their Bibles, hats, shoes, etc. The Lord Provost and a part of the Nottinghamshire Militia immediately attended to preserve the peace. The alarm having subsided, Mr. Ewing finished the service. The Tabernacle was by order of the Magistrates prevented from being open again in the evening till a report be made by tradesmen of the sufficiency of the building. The cause of the alarm has been variously reported; by some, that a few of the pillars which support the gallery had sunk a little, by/

by others, that a boy having fixed up a temporary seat in a window overset himself and kicked out a pane of glass."

(Glasgow Courier, 30. 7. 99.)

The evening service was adjourned, and an open air meeting, attended by six or seven thousand, was held on the green slope beneath Glasgow Cathedral. Rowland Hill records his extreme exhaustion after having preached, and writes in his journal that he was barely able to conclude with prayer. His chest was wracked with pain and he was spitting blood. (Second Tour, Hill, p.24)

Such was the alarming conclusion of Ewing's first Sabbath in Glasgow. It can well be imagined how such a day must have affected him. He had given up his home, his family ties and his friendship in Edinburgh, to come to a strange city where he did not know above six people. He still smarted under the lashing attack contained in the Pastoral Admonition which had recently been read from every parish pulpit in the land. He was disturbed by the near-tragedy of the Tabernacle's opening, and apprehensive of the reaction of the public to the new scheme after its disastrous start. This fear ultimately proved groundless. The magistrates were prompt in their examination of the fabric, and in issuing/

issuing a certificate of safety. The services were soon resumed and the numbers attending showed no sign of decreasing. Ten weeks later, Andrew Fuller on his first visit to Scotland was able to report in his journal that -

"an amazing congregation is gathered and that chiefly from they know not where - from the highways and the hedges. The other ministers in the town, it is true, have lost some; but all speak highly of Ewing Mr. Ewing told me, that his grand motive for leaving the Church, and engaging in his present undertaking, was a desire to preach the Gospel to people who heard it not, and could not hear it, upon the old plan."

(Journal, Fuller)

Nor was he left to labour alone. Before long he had gathered around him a company of enthusiastic laymen, eager to help in such practical evangelistic work. (F. & D. Ewing, p.30).

On the face of it, Ewing's difficulties had resolved themselves. His future in Glasgow as a Gospel preacher seemed to be assured. But vexing trouble swiftly came, and from an unexpected source. In severing his connection with the Church of Scotland Ewing must have been confident that he was leaving internal controversy behind him and entering upon a new dimension of liberty in/

in his preaching, safe from the threats and co-ercion of ecclesiastical authority. He had reckoned without the restless energy, the dominating personality and the implacable purpose of Robert Haldane. At the very outset of the new ministry began a clash of wills, which dragged on, largely under the surface, for eight years, before the final eruption of bitter recrimination that was never thereafter truly healed. At the time it seemed a tragic rupture, destructive of the well-being of the new churches. Yet out of it, by the grace of God, emerged a poverty-stricken but purified company of churches, dependent no longer on the patronage of the rich, but finding instead their succour in the mutual help and encouragement of their own union.

The course of the quarrel between the two men is complicated, but its origin can be fairly briefly stated. On the 8th July, 1799, Ewing broke his journey from Aberdeen to Glasgow in order to receive a deed from Haldane (See Appendix H) in connection with his occupancy of the Tabernacle. Ewing was under the impression that the building had been given over to him, provided he adhered to the plain terms of the agreement. The possibility/

possibility of the formation of a church in the building was not mentioned. Haldane, on the other hand, quickly drew a distinction between the ministry of Ewing to the 'promiscuous multitude' in the Tabernacle, and the eventual constitution of a regular church. He urged that since the work had prospered a church should be formed, and proposed that the members' first responsibility should be the provision of a house for their permanent use. Naturally, he was anxious that they should negotiate with him for a transfer of the Tabernacle to their corporate ownership. In this new situation the individual agreement with Ewing would cease to be necessary, and could be terminated. This attitude Ewing regarded as a breach of the original contract, and one which made unreasonable demands on the slender resources of a newly formed congregation. For this reason he delayed the formation of a church which might otherwise have been harmoniously achieved.

The Church in the Edinburgh Circus had come into existence untroubled by dissension. Their main objective was to end the practice of dispensing Communion to those who were openly indifferent to the Gospel, as was the common custom in the Established Church of the time.

Aikman said:

"This/

"This was a yoke under which we had long groaned; and we hailed with gratitude to God, the arrival of that happy day when we first enjoyed the so much wished for privilege of separating from an impure communion, and of uniting exclusively with those whom it was meet and fit that we should judge to be all the children of God."

(Life, Haldane, p. 233)

In December, 1798, about a dozen of the men most interested in the possibility of a Circus Church - including R. and J. Haldane, Aikman, Campbell, Gibson, Ritchie and Ewing - met together for prayers and planning. To Ewing was entrusted the task of preparing a draft constitution, and after several discussions it was approved. James Haldane, though reluctant, was called to the office of pastor, and ordained to the ministry on 3rd February, 1799, in a service that lasted for nearly five hours (Miss. Mag.), in the midst of the wildest weather for years (Glas. Cour. 5.2.99.)

The government of the church was congregational, administered by the pastor and the office-bearers, in the presence, and with the consent of the church meeting. The Christian credentials, both in life and testimony, of prospective members were carefully scrutinised. Those who were politically suspect were automatically refused. Breaches of Christian behaviour came under the/

the rebuke of the church, and serious offences against faith or morality were punished by separation from the fellowship. Restoration was only possible after sincere repentance (Address, Haldane, p. 73)

Within a few weeks of the first discussions, the Circus Church came into existence with simplicity and joy. It was far otherwise with Greville Ewing and his friends in Glasgow. Why should this have been so? Was Haldane reasonable in the attitude he took? Was Ewing unnecessarily stubborn and suspicious in his negotiations with Haldane? Some part of the answer to these questions can be found in an examination of the letters that passed between the two men at the height of their disagreement during the first six months of 1800.

Haldane had given Ewing a life tenancy of the Tabernacle, authorising him to use the offerings and the seat-rents, to provide for his salary, running expenses and repairs. Any surplus was to be administered corporately by the Tabernacle pastors and R. Haldane, for the benefit of training men for the ministry. There was no suggestion that the formation of a church "sharing divine ordinances" would have any effect on the/

the terms of this agreement. It would naturally be wise for such a church to consider, from the outset, the possibilities arising from the death or removal of Ewing, with regard to their occupancy of the Tabernacle, but that such a settlement be regarded as an urgent necessity, rather than as future contingency, is not to be found, even by implication, in the terms of the Tack. But due to the insistence of Haldane it figures as a principle factor, as the Glasgow Tabernacle people proceeded to arrange for the formation of a church.

On February 28th Ewing wrote on their behalf, presumably seeking assurances about the proposed church's future in the event of his departure. The terms of the letter we do not know, but Haldane replied on March 4th proposing the terms upon which he would be willing to settle the disposal of the property. He gives two alternatives. The first is, that he will sell for £1,000 less than cost. The second plan is more complicated. He will in this case forego £700, and accept the surplus of the church's income to pay off the interest and principal of the remainder. Should Ewing leave before the debt is discharged, there would be a year's/

year's moratorium to enable the church to decide what to do, and should they desire to remain in occupancy, they must either pay the balance due, or give security for payment within five years. He says optimistically -

"The above plan is simple, and the advantages to those who wish to join in such church-fellowship as you propose, are, in my opinion, obvious. . . ."

(F. & D. Ewing, p. 33)

Should the money be repaid immediately, in a lump sum, it would enable him to plough it back into Tabernacle evangelism elsewhere. But if not, he was determined to retain the building, so that in the event of Ewing's death or departure, he could place another man in the situation who could draw in the crowds by the power of his Gospel preaching - the basic idea of the scheme. He could foresee this purpose being thwarted should the possession of the property pass from his hands to those of an independent church, whose choice of a pastor might well be inconsistent with the original design, and whose policies might be dominated by the few to the detriment of the many.

Ewing's

Ewing's reply is not extant, but that it was unsatisfactory to Haldane can be judged by his next letter dated 20th March, in which he comments in distinctly cool tones -

" . . . as to the Tabernacle, I am not sure I understand you in your last letter or not"

(Ibid. p. 36)

Thereupon he reiterates his proposals and urges their acceptance.

During the month of April Ewing laid these plans before his friends at the Tabernacle. Not unexpectedly, they declined to accept these binding conditions at such an early stage of the church's life. In this decision Ewing fully concurred. He was beginning to realise the hazards of having to work in the shadow of wealthy and wilful support. Ewing communicated this decision to Haldane, whose reply, dated 24th April, is even more strained than previously;

"I am sorry that you and I differ so much in our sentiments, respecting the Tabernacle; as I have written you fully on that subject I shall not again begin it. As to patronage, however, I must say, although especially in this country it sounds very ill, I do not think in its abused meaning at least, it can be applied to this case. Sometimes one may properly exercise power put into his hands for good purposes, and in such cases/

cases, when there is a probability of abuses, should it be given up, I think duty would be sacrificed I really think you have not well considered my offer"

(Ibid. p. 41)

The deteriorating relationship is reflected in the conclusion of the letter. Whereas on all previous occasions Haldane had sent his kindest love to Mrs. E., etc., now he finishes in the most formal fashion - "I am, my dear sir, yours very sincerely"

In the face of this impasse Ewing suggested a meeting between the main partners in the Tabernacle scheme, on the grounds that the problem that had arisen in the Glasgow situation might well be a common one. He hoped that out of such joint consultation there might emerge a clearer and more acceptable policy. In this appeal he found himself quickly rebuffed.

Haldane's reply, dated 20th May, is in a much less peremptory tone, and this fact reveals even more clearly the working of his mind. He had had ample time maturely to reflect on the whole business, so this was no unpremeditated outburst, but a characteristic and calculated statement of views. Perhaps for the first time Ewing saw the true nature of his sponsor. A number of facts now became plain to him.

First/

First, the whole idea of joint consultation was an illusion. The other parties to the agreement might discuss and plan to their heart's content, but these opinions were not likely to have the slightest effect on Haldane, once he had made up his own mind about any course of action.

"I observe what you say about proposing a meeting with Mr. Innes and my brother, but I really cannot think of putting them or you to that trouble upon a matter that, as you know, my mind has long been made up on, and which regards me personally much more than it does any of you."

(Ibid., p. 42)

Second, Haldane here revealed that characteristic, so irritating in personal relationships, of having always to be in the right, and of attributing to others the fault that he himself most displays:

". . . . your views now seem altered The question is, what is right to be done - I have been in one mind about this from the beginning" (own underlining)

(Ibid. p. 43)

Third, Haldane revealed an indifference to human relationships that bordered on the unscrupulous. Under the pious disguise of obedience to the prompting of Providence, he sought to drive a wedge between Ewing and those/

those of his fellow-workers at the Tabernacle who had refused Haldane's terms. He cloaked with an appearance of religion a proposal of disloyalty:

" You told me the four gentlemen refused to form a church in such circumstances; but are you bound to them? Why not follow your own opinion, or at least a proposal you made to form a church? It would no doubt have been more agreeable had they gone along with you, but their not doing so cannot be helped; and I doubt not that you will get many good serious people who will act according to present circumstances"

(Ibid. p. 43)

Fourth, there was surely more than a trace of hypocrisy in his advice to Ewing not to take too much thought for the morrow. If one thing plainly emerges from the whole episode, it is surely Haldane's own attitude in the discussions - his insistence on the security of his own property and capital against every possible contingency.

Finally, Haldane fell into the error of self-righteousness.

" earnestly pray to Him for direction, and He will direct you my mind is so completely made up, that I trust I have been directed, and that you and I shall both in the end be satisfied that the best has been done."

(Ibid. p. 44)

From/

From the conclusion of the letter we learn that diplomatic relations are to be resumed with the Ewing family. Haldane ends "Kindest compliments to Mrs. E., and believe me, Ever yours" ⁽¹⁾

Ewing's reply, written after **an** interval of two weeks, on 4th June, runs to more than 4,000 words, and makes it plain that he is not prepared to acquiesce to Haldane's arguments. Systematically he deals with them, and coldly states the grounds of his disagreement on every point. He declares that to deny joint-consultation is unjust. He reminds Haldane that he (Ewing) had always been of the same mind with regard to the terms of their agreement, and -

"that from the first moment you hinted to me the most distant intention, not to dedicate these Tabernacles inalienably and forever to the service of God, and to full and scriptural exercise of Christian liberty, (of which I thought you entertained high ideas), I discovered the strongest symptoms of disappointment and alarm."

(Ibid. p. 46)

Ewing had resigned from the Church of Scotland to escape from ecclesiastical authority and patronage only to discover a more oppressive form of it than ever he had known in Lady Glenorchy's. Had he known Haldane's true intentions he would have had nothing to do/

(1) together with 3 doz. port wine!

do with the Tabernacle plan. It was Haldane's duty to have made every part of it absolutely clear from the beginning.

The people assembling in the Tabernacle had been led to believe that they were to worship in the building free from any conditions other than those originally explained to them by their pastor. Now that this assurance was to be set aside, they were not likely to be impressed by Haldane's integrity. There was more involved than a mere financial transaction. Such duplicity might well endanger the entire future of Tabernacle evangelism. Grimly Ewing warns -

" the question is at what expense can your plan be accomplished? You should have sat down first, and counted the cost. If you think it can be accomplished in the way you propose, I fear you will find there has been an error in the calculations."

(Ibid. p. 48)

To the proposal that he should ignore the counsel of his friends, and negotiate independently of them with Haldane, he replies -

"Why, really, when I recollect the trouble they have taken, and the obloquy they have endured, for the sake of a cause they have truly at heart I should be ashamed to bid them go about their business."

(Ibid. p. 49)

There/

There were few enough real friends of the Tabernacle without deliberately offending any. Ewing then concludes his case with a declaration of conscience in the matter, which he is prepared to follow, whatever the cost. His obedience had taken him along an unknown road that had often proved painful, but there would be no turning back, even in the face of frustration and disappointment - "I cannot help it. . . ." His final salutation contrives to reach absolute zero in its lack of warmth - "Very faithfully yours, Greville Ewing."

That Ewing was near to breaking point, he himself admits. His friends knew that he was seriously considering giving up the Tabernacle altogether (F. & D. p. 59). Haldane's response was immediate. Almost by return of post (June 7th) he replied in a much more conciliatory tone, and while refusing to retreat from his opinions, he nevertheless acknowledged that he was partly responsible for the unfortunate quarrel between them, which should never have been allowed to take place. He pleads for an end to it; urges that all unpleasant letters in their possession should be burned; signs himself/

himself with "compliments", "affection" and "esteem"; and begs acceptance of "three dozens of port wine."

(F. & D., p. 58)

It is not necessary to suppose that Haldane was insincere in this offer of reconciliation. Rather the change of mood is characteristic of the volatile temperament, quick to quarrel, but equally eager to let bygones be bygones, once the heat of the moment has passed. It is typical also of such an attitude to suppose that others can as readily forget and forgive. In spite of all the inconsistencies with which this letter abounds there is a friendly generosity about the appeal that rings true. For Ewing to have refused the offered hand would have made him appear ungracious, yet he was not convinced of the sincerity of Haldane's motives. Certainly he did not accept them at their face value. Ample proof of this is provided by one obvious fact. He did not burn the letter! Suspicion had already taken deep root. He was already beginning to prepare for the coming storm. Yet to what extent did Ewing's brooding sense of personal slight contribute to the final breakdown? A man always on the watch lest he be exploited or manipulated is not likely/

likely to respond to the one he suspects with selfless enthusiasm.

On the other hand, it appears as an evidence of good faith on Haldane's part, that he seems to have burned Ewing's letters, for at no time did he make use of them, though by 1808 he was looking for all available ammunition with which to attack his former partner.

Both men now realised that a crisis had developed of such magnitude as to threaten the very continuance of the Tabernacle scheme. They saw that an open breach between them at that stage would seriously weaken, if not totally destroy, the popular and promising evangelistic enterprise in Jamaica Street, and would certainly cause dismay to the circle of their friends, as well as provide satisfaction to those who watched eagerly for their stumbling.

In a final attempt to avert such a catastrophe Ewing went to Edinburgh to have personal discussions with Haldane. But whatever hopes he had entertained of a settlement were soon disappointed. Both men were adamant, and neither was prepared to yield to the other. The three dozens of port wine had no softening effect on the situation! Eventually they agreed to discuss the/

the matter again in the presence of two, and eventually three, friends (probably Aikman, Campbell and J. Haldane).

What Haldane's harangues could not achieve, the friendly persuasion of this group finally did. They pointed out to him that the personal differences between himself and Haldane were confidential, and could never be resolved by arbitration, because there existed no material evidence that could prove misrepresentation or concealment. They assured him that as long as he was pastor, the proposed church had security of tenure, and although a permanent settlement was delayed, the alternative prospect was disastrous. They pleaded with him to forget the argument, and to form a church as soon as possible.

Ewing agreed to this appeal, provided he could also gain the consent of his friends in Glasgow. He also agreed to be reconciled to Haldane, but he makes it clear that on his part, it was grudgingly done:

"I consented to give up all further dispute with Mr. H I also consented to forgive him the injury, which I thought he had done me. A reconciliation took part accordingly, which was bona fide on my part, though the opinion I had of the manner in which I had been used, was entirely the same"

(F. & D. Ewing, p. 60).

On/

On this basis Ewing returned to Glasgow to persuade his friends there to carry through their longed-for plan of forming themselves into a scriptural Gospel Church. Their anxiety and hesitation in undertaking an unknown financial commitment was now to some extent removed. The road ahead was clear.

And so, at last, after more than a year of outward success and secret uncertainty the much-prayed-for moment arrived. After a series of Sunday afternoon sermons on the fourth chapter of Ephesians, and after a full exposition of his views concerning the Lord's Supper, and having declared the scriptural nature of Christian fellowship and the responsibilities of church membership, on August 15th, 1800, the church was solemnly constituted, and sat down together to share in Communion - a moment of deep joy and thanksgiving for Greville Ewing, and for those who had shared with him in bringing the Gospel to the multitude in the Tabernacle.

In order to explain to enquirers the nature of the constitution and discipline of the Tabernacle Church, a brief list of regulations was drawn up and printed for circulation. They were not regarded as authoritative, in the scriptural sense, but rather as
a/

a convenient method of outlining the general principles underlying the church's order. They were informative and explanatory, rather than regulative and legal. Eventually the document ceased to circulate, not because it had been superseded, but simply because the nature and responsibilities of membership became widely known and understood. (F. & D. p. 64). Three points deserve special notice.

The first rule laid down that -

"Besides the ordinary Public Worship of the Lord's Day, there shall be a Church Meeting weekly, for the purposes of Social Worship, Discipline, and Mutual Edification."

(F. & D. Ewing, p. 64)

This explicit definition of the Church Meeting as it was conceived in these early days is interesting as the prototype of subsequent development. Matters of discipline were dealt with towards the close of the meeting, in private, after all non-members had withdrawn. "Social Worship" was simply the exercise of a common ministry of prayer, such as is still familiar in the "old-fashioned prayer-meeting." The "Mutual Edification", which was to become such a source of controversy in later years among the new Congregational churches, was, in its beginnings, conducted thus:

"The/

"The New Testament was regularly gone through, as the subject of the exercise; and hence everyone might know beforehand, the passage to be considered on any particular evening. Such passage the pastor was accustomed to read, and to give, in a few words, a general view of its import, as standing in connection with the previous context. He then made the announcement, that "if any of the brethren had remarks to offer on the passage read the church would be glad to hear them;" and having done so, he sat down. If one stood up to speak, it was left to the option of the pastor, whether to give opportunity for a second, in the same way, or not. In either case, or if it happened that no one felt inclined or prepared to 'exhort', he himself spoke on the passage, so long as the time permitted. This plan was proposed by Ewing as affording what he long before had wished for, namely a fellowship meeting on a large scale."

(Mem. Matheson, p. 238)

As early as 1795 Ewing had felt that such a development of spontaneous Bible study would be an encouragement to deeper Christian fellowship within the church, but had been hindered from putting the idea into practice at Lady Glenorchy's, not because of the reluctance of the members, but because of the traditional authority of Presbyterian Church government (F. & D. Ewing, p. 128). When he introduced the practice into the life of the Tabernacle church, it was part of the week-night meeting, and never intended to serve any other purpose. There was, naturally enough, a division of opinion/

opinion about the propriety of the exercise, and Ewing's attitude was a sensible one:

"The principle on which exhortation was adopted in our church, was this, that those who thought it positively enjoined in scripture, should be satisfied they obeyed scripture, by the proposed practice on a weekday; and that those who did not think it so enjoined, should be willing, on the admission of the lawfulness of the exercise, that a weekday meeting should be so employed."

(F. & D. Ewing, p. 129)

The second rule required the Lord's Supper to be observed every Sunday, and only when a minister was present to officiate. During the conversations prior to the founding of the Edinburgh church, Ewing had urged a weekly celebration as most consistent with scripture, but the majority had gone against him in the matter, being influenced by the practice of English Independency. He now had the opportunity to follow his own convictions, and it is interesting to note that the Edinburgh church eventually came to agree with him in 1802, and the weekly observance became the rule among the congregational churches, with the exception of Aberdeen and some churches in the north-east. (Mem. Matheson, p. 198, fn.)

The fourth paragraph is significant, in that it laid/

laid down a basis of tolerance, making it possible for non-members of approved piety to receive the sacrament, and permitting members to communicate elsewhere if they so desired. The Glasgow Tabernacle church continued to hold this position in the face of a spirit of narrowness and exclusion which barred the tables of not a few of the churches, and destroyed the freedom in the Lord which had been such an attractive mark of their fellowship in the beginning.

A description of Ewing at this stage of his ministry is to be found in the words of one of his students, Mr. Robertson. Allowing for the eulogistic content, it nevertheless portrays the finer aspects of Ewing's character, and expresses something of the determined vision and humility that animated those early congregational churches and their pastors. (See Appendix G)

The Tabernacle church soon became an established part of the ecclesiastical scene in Glasgow. Ewing was now in the full power of his ministry, and engaged in a wide variety of labour. Besides lecturing and writing and the ever-increasing demands of his pastoral work, he was preaching, with the help of his assistant, three times a Sunday, presiding over the Friday night church meeting/

meeting, conducting a regular mid-week service. He introduced what was then a novel feature of Scottish church life - special services for children.

Throughout ~~these~~ the first ten years of his ministry, (1793-1803) can be discerned a steadfast obedience to what he felt to be the prompting of truth. His life bears the mark of a deep Gospel constraint, the common factor in all lasting evangelical enterprise.

He had been prepared by his earlier struggles for the years of adversity that lay ahead, and by his courage he consolidated the wavering forces of Congregationalism. The young churches, handicapped already by official ecclesiastical condemnation, were repeatedly torn by internal dissension. Through all this strife of tongues Ewing held the fort. His pulpit was the sounding-board for a sane and scriptural Independency, and those who heard him found not only fellowship and blessing in the worship, but growing conviction and intellectual enlightenment. In his writings he answered the arguments of Presbyterianism, and refuted the exaggerations and aberrations of the extremists in the new churches. His case was always rooted/

rooted in lucid and logical exposition of scripture. Bewildered men took heart at the example and message of this man in the west, who was proving, practically, that Dissent did not necessarily mean disintegration, and that intelligent Independency was preferable to oppressive patronage or noisy anarchy.

His home in Carlton Place had an open door to the anxious enquirer, the obscure and poorly paid evangelist, or the perplexed and lonely pastor, all of whom found friendship and encouragement in the gracious welcome they received, and perhaps above all, caught a new vision from the unflagging energy and determination of Greville Ewing.